



HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SCENE
KEEPING KIDS IN THE NEWS

555 E Downie St
Alma, MI 48801
(517) 202-1808

www.highschoolsportsscene.com

- **Publisher**
Randy Miniard
randy@highschoolsportsscene.com
517-202-1808
- **High School Liaison**
Paul Hornak
paul@highschoolsportsscene.com
989-331-1168
- **Editorial**
John Raffel, David Cook,
Butch Harmon, Scott Salowich,
Scott Keyes
- **Photographers**
Chuck Prikasky, Zip Widman,
Russ Pierce, Skip Traynor,
Dana McCann, Bob Campbell,
Gary Williams, Don Goostrey,
Kim Larner, Nick Rethman,

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Hello Sports Fans! It's another great day at Sports Scene So are you ready for some football?

I know I am.

This issue marks the 10th Annual Sports Scene's football preview. It's hard to believe it has been 10 years already.

So trivia question for you. Who was the player that graced the first-ever football issue? I will give you a hint. He played his high school ball at Ovid-Elsie and he later went on to star at Grand Valley State University.

If you guessed Chris Robinson you would have been right. I heard Robinson was helping out the Ovid-Elsie program in recent years and from what I was told he could probably still lace up the cleats for the Marauders. I remember watching that guy run with grace, quickness and speed. He was a joy to watch that's for sure.

Meanwhile other guys who have graced the cover of our biggest issue of the year in recent years included Alex Grace and Brian Cole, who are currently playing their college football at Western Michigan and Mississippi State University respectively.

Then there was Ithaca's Travis Smith, who graced the cover of the football issue twice. Travis was recently named one of the top 25 quarterbacks of the last 25 years by the Detroit Free Press. Travis' career was cut short because of injury, but let me just say that in the past 10 years he was one of the few players that could carry a team in his back like no other. Travis finished his career a perfect 41-0 and won the first-ever Mr. Football award as a senior.

Now fast forward to 2018. Although the names change and players come and go this time of year gets my blood pumping. It's football season and I love this time of year.

For you seniors, remember this could be your last year lacing up your cleats so make the best of it. Never take yourself for granted and leave it all on the field every time you hit the gridiron. Play with passion and most of all play with pride. Wear your school colors with pride and passion because you never can tell when a play could be your last.

A special thanks goes out to everyone that helped pull together Sports Scene's Annual Football Preview and make it a reality. Thanks to all of the advertisers and people including Butch Harmon, David Cook, John Raffel, Scott Keyes, and all of our numerous writers and photographers who have helped us along the way.

Lastly I want to dedicate this issue to my dad Jay, who is currently battling failing health in Kentucky. If our readers could say a prayer for him it would be greatly appreciated.

God Bless!



Randy Miniard
Publisher/Owner
517-202-1808
randy@highschoolsportsscene.com



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Sacred Heart Has New Coach Entering 8-Player Football Era

John Raffel Sports Scene

John Ruggles picked a unique time to take over as Mount Pleasant Sacred Heart football coach.

The Fighting Irish are making their debut as an 8-player football team.

It's his first season as head coach. He's coached for more than 20 years in various schools. He's been at Michigan, Georgia and Arizona.

"Around here, most recently I've been at Sacred Heart (the last year) and before that I was at Chip Hills and before that at Ferris State," he said. "I started my career at Ithaca."

It's his first time ever as a head coach.

"When Jamie (Slate) got the (defensive coordinator) job at Bay City Western, I decided to throw my

hat in the ring," Ruggles said. "I went to Sacred Heart and played at Sacred Heart. My kids have gone and do go to Sacred Heart. It was a natural to be a part of Sacred Heart."

Ruggles has been happy so far with the transition to 8-player football.

"It's been great," he said. "We started doing several 5-on-5 (passing scrimmages) which correlates better with the 8-man format. The kids have had a great time with it and figuring out the nuances that come with it. It's still football. The defensive coverage is a little bit different. You just can't run your normal coverages that we did with 11-man. It's a little bit of a learning curve. But the coaches and players are excited about it. They're looking forward to the season."

But there will be some new looks. "You've got six guys on an 11-man

team eligible, in 8-man ball you have five eligible," Ruggles said. "You only lose one eligible player, but it's a little different nuance like five men have to be on the line of scrimmage instead of seven. It changes our defensive scheme more than our offensive scheme, although it does change the offensive scheme, no doubt."

The field is 40 yards wide and 100 yards long.

All nine Sacred Heart games will be in the North Central Thumb League, Red Division.

"We have a little bit of a distance but it will be tough competition," Ruggles said. "Seven of the nine teams that we'll play were in the playoffs last year. It will be a tough schedule. If we do well, we should be battle tested by the time we finish the season."



Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart will make the move to 8-man football this season. New coach John Ruggles anticipates a lot of points to be scored this season for the Irish. (File Photo)

Mount Pleasant Defensive End Set For Strong Junior Season

John Raffel Sports Scene

Defensive end Tyler Huenemann is headed for his junior season with Mount Pleasant's football team but has already made a major name for himself.

He's coming off a strong sophomore season.

"It went pretty good," he said. "We missed playoffs, which was unexpected. All together, it went fine. I learned a lot from the seniors. They taught me a lot. It was a good year."

Huenemann has some unique strengths at defensive end.

"I fire off the ball quick and I read

pretty fast," he said. "My pass rush, I feel, is one of the stronger parts of my game."

He's likely to be at defensive end again this season, although Huenemann anticipates seeing some time at defensive tackle.

"I've been focusing on speed," he said. "I've been working with my coach a little bit on getting off the guy quicker. We've been doing a lot of footwork."

Huenemann plays tight end on offense.

"Last year, I only had five or six catches," he said. "But we threw a good amount to our receivers."

As a receiver, "for being a big guy,

I run routes and get open faster than most people expect," Huenemann said.

He like his team's potential this season. Mount Pleasant was 5-4 the last two years.

Huenemann has been on varsity since his freshman season.

"I think football is my better sport," he said. "I think I'm more skilled in football."

Huenemann is getting some interest in football. He's already been offered by Central Michigan University.

"I'm open to all the campuses (that have interest in him)," he said. "I still have a long time to decide where I want to go."



Tyler Huenemann

Breckenridge Expecting Strong Year From Senior QB

John Raffel Sports Scene

Carter Staley is a senior quarterback who has led the Breckenridge Huskies to the playoffs the last two seasons and has engineered a remarkable turnaround in the program's success.

But his coach, Kris Robinson, wouldn't be surprised if Staley does even more this year.

This will be Staley's fourth year at quarterback for the Huskies.

"He's improved every year greatly," Robinson said. "He's put on probably 20 pounds. He works

hard and has a fantastic attitude, and a great work ethic. We're pretty excited about his progression, his ability to throw the ball and where he'll be at this year. He's a big kid and runs the ball hard."

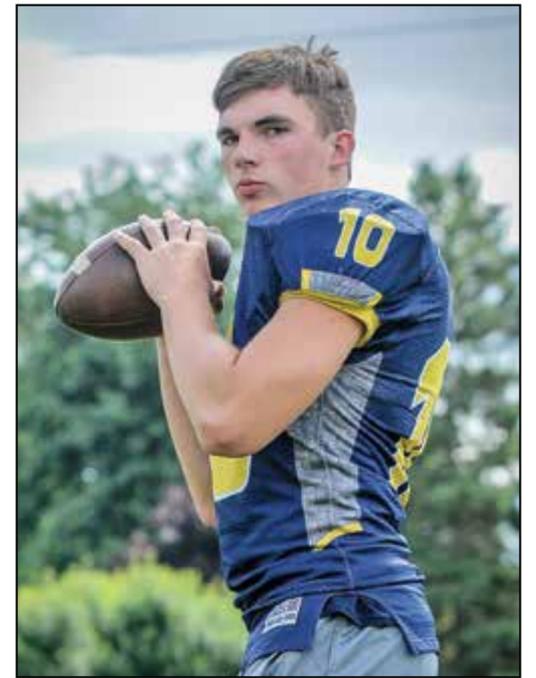
Staley started as a freshman when the Huskies were 0-9 and outscored 386-68. But as a sophomore, Staley helped the Huskies turn its program around with a remarkable 9-0 regular season. But the Huskies lost 21-6 to Saginaw Nouvel in the first round of the playoffs. They outscored their opponents 357-111 that season. In his junior year, Staley's team lost the opener but won the rest of the regular season, plus two

playoff games. They lost to Lake City 20-18 in the regional title game.

He threw for 724 yards and six touchdowns and ran for 1,023 yards and 16 TDs.

Robinson said Staley has been busy in passing leagues over the summer and his arm has gotten stronger. He also expects his quarterback to be very effective in running the triple option offense.

Staley has received all-league honors from the Mid-Sate Activities Conference. He's getting intense looks from Division II schools. He's also in other sports but football has been his top sport.



Breckenridge's Carter Staley is looking to lead the Huskies back to the playoffs for the third straight season. (Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photo)

Hemlock Anticipates Banner Season From Esckilsen

John Raffel Sports Scene

Hemlock's Jake Esckilsen is set to have a memorable senior season as a lineman for the Huskies this fall.

It's his third varsity season. He was a first-team all-conference and honorable mention selection a year ago

His coach, Adam Clark, said the keys behind Esckilsen's successes are easy to explain.

"I think Jake really wants to be a good football player," Clark said. "He's worked very hard at it these past 2 1/2 years or so."

Esckilsen's strengths as a lineman have been particularly impressive.

"Jake, coming into his freshman season, we all had to take notice of

what a large kid he was," Clark said. "He was a good football player, a highly aggressive football player at that stage in his development. We threw him in there and coached him as rapidly as we could. But there's only so much a kid can take before overload sets in and he starts going the other way on you. There was some waiting."

"He started at left tackle his freshman year on the JV team. I'd say the final third of the season is when we really started to see some promise there. We brought him up as a sophomore to the varsity. He didn't start the first couple of games. By week three, he was in the starting lineup as a guard and has really flourished ever since."

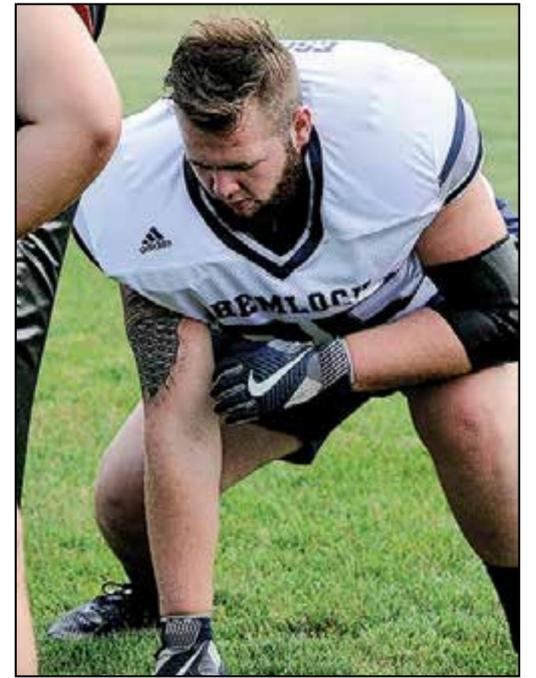
Esckilsen does an extensive amount of work during the

offseason.

"He does training at Hemlock, but is also involved in a few of these outside the building with trainers," Clark said. "He's put the effort in, no doubt. He's participated in plenty of football camps. Part of his problem in regards to lack off offers in his point was he did not do the camp circuit. He had a medical crisis in his family with a family member fighting cancer. That was the center of priority a year ago."

"For someone of his stature not to receive an offer, it's really it's a matter of 'let's see a few of your senior game films and show us you've gotten better,'" Clark said. "That's the situation he finds himself in. The first couple of games your senior year are vital. All these colleges have their wish list. They have their recruiting depth chart. I really believe he's a MAC level offensive lineman. I feel that's where he would fit in and would be greatly challenged."

Esckilsen also participates in powerlifting, track and wrestling.



Hemlock's Jake Esckilsen has evolved over the last few years and has made himself into one of the top linemen in Michigan. (Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photo)

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Senior Class Looking To Take Haslett To Next Level This Season

David Cook Sports Scene

Last fall, the Haslett football team finished second in the CAAC Red and reached the district title game. With a large group of veterans back this season, the Vikings are poised to take the next step.

A total of nine starters return on offense and eight starters are back on defense from a team that turned in an 8-3 overall record last year.

"We have a strong senior class that is looking to finish what the 2017 class started," said Haslett coach Charlie Otlewski. "The key to a successful season for us is to score early and often. We also have to create turnovers on defense and get off the field on high percentage of third downs defensively."

The Viking offense returns a group of players that will provide the firepower to light up the scoreboard. At quarterback, Mitchell Mowid piloted an offense that put up 25.5 points per game last year. Mowid will throw to a talented and veteran corps of receivers led by Jaden Thelen (6-1, 175), Hyrum Tibbitts (5-11, 176) and Quintin Hernandez (5-11, 170) who have drawn the interest of college recruiters.

Haslett also features a solid ground game led by senior running back Ben Brittain (5-10, 180) who also has the skills to play on Saturday.

Providing the blocking is a solid offensive line led by Noah Kildea (6-2, 255), Michael Cronin (6-1, 225) and Kyle Pinkelman (6-1, 240).

Defensively, the Vikings have

solid players returning at all three levels. Up front, defensive ends Drew Dabler (5-11, 215) and Matt Plaga (6-1, 185) provide strong play at the ends with Garrett Young and Kildea anchoring the defensive tackle spots.

Damen Redmond and Hernandez head up a solid group of linebackers. Logan Cross, who will also see action at wide receiver, returns as a starter in the secondary along with Thelen.

With the CAAC Red down to six teams this season, Haslett will be playing four non-league games. The Vikings have a challenging schedule with Coldwater and Lansing Sexton up the first two weeks of the season before league play begins. Haslett closes out the regular season with games against Goodrich and Marshall.

With a strong senior class Haslett is looking to go a few steps closer to Ford Field this season after finishing 8-3 a season ago. (File Photo)



New Lansing Eastern Coach Eyes Major Turnaround

John Raffel Sports Scene

Jordan Morgan has signed on as the new football coach this fall at Lansing Eastern.

He realizes he has an incredible challenge.

The Quakers have struggled through three straight 0-9 seasons. The previous four years to that, they were 3-33. They haven't had a winning season since 1997.

The Quakers were outscored 444-60 last year and 360-25 in the previous season.

But Morgan is ready to get to work. Last season, he helped out as a volunteer.

"Prior to that, I did some youth coaching in the Morley Stanwood area by Big Rapids," he said. "It's been mostly a playing career with professional

indoor football in Bemidji, Minn. Prior to that, I had a rookie minicamp with the New York Giants. Prior to that, my college career had me as a four-year starter at Ferris State University."

Morgan got a job in the Lansing area with the fire department.

"I knew I wanted to get back into coaching football," he said. "I saw the school was close to the hospital. I reached out and saw they needed some help and came on as a volunteer. After getting timeout with the kids and realizing how much I was loving it and enjoying it and seeing the program go a certain way, I knew I wanted to stick around Lansing Eastern after I learned (the previous coach) had been let go. I talked to the AD and said I wanted to come up in any fashion.

"When the posting came up, I decided to put my name in the hat."

He was hired during the winter.

"I got in there right away and in February and March, we started a winter lifting program all the way through the summer," Morgan said. "We did some 7-on-7s. I definitely believe we had a good start going into two-a-days."

Morgan was realistic about this year's prospects.

"It's been pretty rough the last few years," he said. "I'm thinking we're going to do very well. I have high expectations for these kids. We had a young program last year. A majority of sophomores were starting. These guys are juniors now. They've had the varsity experience. They'll be a lot less scared, a lot less timid. We've been putting in a lot of work. These guys have been coming in, showing up all summer. We have some great senior leadership. I'm looking forward to where this thing is going to go."

After struggling through three consecutive 0-9 seasons, Lansing Eastern is looking to break through to the win column this season. (Marvin Hall, High School Sports Scene Photo)

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LCC's Ahern Welcomes Challenges Of Another Season

John Raffel Sports Scene

Make this another football coaching season for a legendary Michigan High School football skipper, Jim Ahern.

The Lansing Catholic skipper started coaching in 1967 and has 51 years under his belt.

He was an assistant the first two years and became head coach in 1969. A 1968 graduate of Western Michigan, Ahern started coaching at Kalamazoo Hackett under Hall of Fame coach Dick Soisson and also served under another Hall of Fame head coach with Don Smeznick at Ogles.

Ahern became head football coach at Palmetto Ridge High School in Fla., in 2004. He's been a past president of Michigan High School Football Coaches Association and was inducted into the Michigan Hall of Fame in 1996.

He coached at Ithaca 1972 to



After more than 50-plus years patrolling the sidelines, Lansing Catholic coach Jim Ahern is still going strong and is not showing any signs of slowing down. (File Photos)

2003.

"When I retired at Ithaca, I coached there a couple of years, then I got suckered into going down to Florida," he said. "If I look back, I probably wouldn't have done it. I came back in 2008 for my last year and started in 2009 at Lansing Catholic."

He lost his wife Geri to cancer in 2009 but returned to Michigan and took over the program at Lansing Catholic. He had state runners-up finishes in 2011 and 2014.

His wins total is in the high 200s.

Ahern admits it's been tough for him to think about not coaching.

"I still enjoy the Friday nights, I like that part of it," he said. "The offseason part is getting pretty old, to be honest with you. It's stuff we used to do when we first started coaching and it gave us an edge. But now if you don't do

the stuff, you're way behind. I enjoy the season part of it. It's the offseason that is getting old. I still enjoy the game and the preparation."

Ahern has been around long enough to realize it's too early to speculate about 2018, although it's human nature to have an inkling even before the first practices are conducted.

"We looked good at 7-on-7s which isn't really football," Ahern said. "I don't think we have anyone we'd considered a superstar person. We're going to be pretty small. I'm worried about the physicality as the season goes on. Our schedule is difficult. We have to stay healthy. We don't have a lot of depth. We're not big. That doesn't hurt you in 7-on-7s. But when you play the actual games, it has to be the whole ball of wax."

Ahern said there's been a lot of difference coaching at a public school such as Ithaca in contrast to a private school like LCC.

"I went to parochial school growing up, Owosso-St. Paul," Ahern said. "I've been away from the private parochial school almost all my career. I think within the school, they're a lot more disciplined. The curriculum is probably the biggest difference. It's extremely difficult. Kids really have to work hard. Sometimes, they overdo it a little bit. I know the kids are very successful at the college level. About 98 percent of our kids are getting into the college

of their choice and they do well.

"We can be a little more disciplined just because it is a private school."

Obviously, coaching has changed in the last 50 seasons.

"It's almost like it's circular and it's coming back to what it used to be," Ahern said. "You'll have different offensive things that will come in and defense will catch up with that. I've seen that happen. When I started coaching we were primarily a triple option team. A lot of that stuff they talk about now is triple option stuff, only in a little different form.

"We've always been a team that throws quite a bit and that hasn't changed much over the years."

Ahern said he's very close to many Ithaca coaches including current skipper Terry Hessbrook.

"Everybody on that staff pretty much played with me or coached with me when I was at Ithaca," he said. "We still have a pretty close relationship with them. It's neat to see those guys being successful too."

There doesn't seem to be a yet



predetermined time when Ahern might coach his final game.

"Up until now, it's pretty much been as long as I stay healthy, I enjoy doing it," he said "But each year, like I said, the offseason stuff gets to be old.

"But you have a different group every year and get close to them as juniors and seniors. When one of those groups graduate, it changes the complexities of the teams. To see them grow in their different positions, I still enjoy that part of it."

Assistant Coach Steps Into Head Spot At Lansing Sexton

John Raffel Sports Scene

Johnel Davis can't wait for his first game as head football coach at Lansing Sexton.

Davis has been coaching at Sexton 14 years and was previously defensive coordinator.

Sexton was 8-4 last season and made the playoffs for the ninth time in the past 11 years.

The Big Red was 6-3 in the regular season and 2-1 in the playoffs.

Davis said he took the position

"because of my passion for developing young lives, wanting to give back to the community and just loving the program. It's deep in my heart."

Davis is a 1990 graduate of Sexton and grew up very close to the high school.

He feels it's a major plus to have past connections to the school as he takes the head coaching job.

"It was one of the advantages, just the relationship I have with the boys, the relationship I have with the community," Davis said. "As for the young men I'm coaching, I know their parents, I know uncles and aunts, sometimes grandmas

and grandpas. There's a lot of love and support that inspired me to say, 'OK, I'm going to do this.'"

Davis took the job officially at the end of April.

He has a new offensive coordinator and will continue to work with the defense.

"We'll stick with the run game, the power game," Davis said. "We'll do the pistol on where the quarterback lines up. We'll be able to do a few more things out of those sets."

Sexton graduated 18 seniors last year.

"I think these young guys are fired up to prove themselves," Davis said. "We're in a race to maturity. We have our offensive line back and most of our defensive line back. We should be OK with our running game. We have to find some playmakers at the skill positions."



Lansing Sexton finished the 2017 season 8-4 and lost in the regional finals. The playoff appearance was the Big Reds ninth in 11 seasons. (Marvin Hall, High School Sports Scene Photo)

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YOUNG OWOSSO

PRESENTS AREA TEAMS TO WATCH

Small In Numbers, Corunna's Football Team Features Plenty Of Talent, Hard-Working Attitude

David Cook Sports Scene

While low on numbers, the Corunna football team has an experienced and dedicated core of players that are determined to improve on last year's 5-4 record.

"This is two of our smallest classes numbers wise for our juniors and seniors," said Corunna coach Kyle Robinson. "Both classes have really persevered throughout their time in our program to develop as a person, athletically and not let the smaller number affect their love for the game."

On offense, the Cavaliers return several seniors that play key roles in Corunna's multiple option attack. Logan Gehringer (6-0, 165) returns at running back with Noah Sims (6-1, 170) returning as a slot back.

Senior Ethan Hollister (6-0, 150) will pilot the offense. A wide receiver last year, Hollister's athleticism will be key at quarterback this year.

Up front, senior lineman Brock Brewer (6-3, 220) returns to anchor the offensive line along with senior tight end Kail Stratton (6-3, 200).

The Cavaliers also feature a sophomore to watch. Nick Steinacker (6-6, 205) is a talented player with plenty of upside who has already been offered by the University of Michigan.

Steinacker also lines up at defensive end on defense where Brewer will be at defensive tackle. Stratton returns at linebacker with Gehringer, Hollister and Sims returning to a veteran secondary.

A core of junior linemen being counted on to step up in the

trenches include Ethan Ford (6-2, 280), Alex Holmes (6-2, 285), Tristian Plashek (6-2, 245) and Alex Schwab (6-3, 220).

Seniors Jacob Thomson (6-2, 175) and Kevin Jackson (6-1, 160) will see action at wide receiver along with defensive line and linebacker on defense respectively.

Juniors that will contribute including Gabe Baumchen (WR/DB), Fisher Morris (SB/LB/K), Peyton Norton (QB/LB) and Wyatt Crego (SB/LB).

Sophomore Scout Jones (6-1, 185) will contribute at running back and linebacker with fellow sophomore Porter Zeeman (5-11, 180) seeing time at slot back and linebacker.

"This year's squad is a much



Corunna coach Kyle Robinson is determined his squad will improve on last year's 5-4 record heading into the 2018 season. (Submitted Photo)

more focused group and is really getting things down in a hurry whether it is from a fundamental or schematic standpoint," Robinson said. "Our ability to take coaching and apply it quickly has really been a very positive characteristic this summer and in the first week of camp."

Team chemistry is also a strong

point for this year's group of Cavaliers.

"These guys have a love for each other," Robinson said. "Both grades have and continue to bond with each other regardless of grade. We are understanding that when you have this love and trust for each other that you will lay it on the line no matter what we are doing."

Galvas Continues To Lead New Lothrop To State Contention

John Raffel Sports Scene

Veteran coach Clint Galvas has his New Lothrop football team, ready to make plenty of noise this season

New Lothrop had another banner season last year but didn't take it as far in the playoffs as the Hornets had hoped. They were 10-0 before losing to eventual champion Pewamo-Westphalia.

Galvas is going onto his 10th season at New Lothrop. The Hornets were 7-4 his first year but have won 10 or more games each of the next eight years and have lost two games one season. They have only suffered one loss each of the previous two seasons.

New Lothrop competes in the Mid-Michigan Activities and was 6-0 for the league title last season 35-14 in the second-

round of the playoffs.

"I think every year going in, I think our ultimate goal is to try to make it to the state final game and to give us an opportunity for a state championship," he said. "Obviously we didn't reach that goal last year. At the same time, I don't think I was a disappointment. We had a heckuva season until we met Pewamo-Westphalia. They obviously won it. We were right there along with them, tied going into the third quarter. A few bounces and plays here and there makes the difference.

"I still consider last year a success. The kids have a lot to hold their heads high about."

Galvas made sure his players had a busy, but productive summer.

"With all the camps and 7-on-7s and conditioning, each and eve year, the

standard gets set higher and higher for the amount of work load necessary to be successful," he said. "In the end, New Lothrop and a few other schools might have been the only team putting in all that work. But now, every team does it. You're try to do a little bit more ever year. We're definitely excited to get rolling."

Galvas is excited with this team's prospects for 2018.

"We have a great nucleus back," he said. "We have four of our five offensive linemen returning with our (junior) quarterback (Avery Moore) returning. It's a great nucleus. We'll have some sophomores in the backfield. We have a kid coming into our district who is talented. It will be a process getting everyone the same page.

"Defensively is where we lost the most. That's what have to work upon."



New Lothrop coach Clint Galvas has the Hornets believing another long playoff push is in their future heading into the 2018 season. New Lothrop finished the season 10-1 in 2017. (Submitted Photo)

Sparrow Presents

Carson Hospital

AREA TEAMS TO WATCH

Veteran Talent Has Carson City-Crystal Eagles Poised To Soar This Season

Butch Harmon Sports Scene

The Carson City-Eagles came up just short of qualifying for the state playoffs last year. This season, with a host of talented players returning, the Eagles have the talent to not only make a run in the playoffs but challenge for the Mid-State Conference title.

"We have a good core group back," said Carson City-Crystal coach Tim Stout. "We have a good group of seniors and three-year starters returning."

A total of seven starters return on the offensive side of the football led by standout senior running back Drew Stout (6-2, 185). Stout, who passed for 1,800 yards as a sophomore quarterback, moved to running back last fall and rushed for 1,871 yards and scored 20 touchdowns on his way to earning honorable-mention, all-state honors.

Stout is joined in the backfield by senior running back Noah Lopez (5-7, 195) who rushed for 750 yards in seven games as a running back last season.

Senior quarterback Aiden

Adkins returns to direct the offense. Last season Adkins piloted the Eagle offense to over 3,000 yards rushing.

Paving the way for the backs is a veteran offensive line. Seniors Brody Mikula (6-7, 215), Brandon Murray and Daniel Smith return up front along with junior Nash Akin and senior tight end Caleb Collins. Several of the seniors are in their third year on the varsity and all of last year's starters return giving the line plenty of experience.

"Offensively, we are a lot farther ahead of where we were last year," Stout said. "Last year I was named head coach a week before fall practice began and we revamped the offense. This year we came into camp looking like a football team."

A trio of underclassmen will also contribute on offense. Sophomores Brian Yeakey and Kyler Stone will see action at running back while freshman quarterback Zane Forist (6-4, 200) will see action in the Eagles' spread package and at tight end.

The defensive side of the

football also features plenty of experienced talent. Mikula returns at defensive end with seniors Bretton Fears (5-11, 200) and Murray returning at defensive tackle. Junior John Ewalt will also be at defensive end.

At linebacker, Smith is a returning two-time, honorable-mention, all-stater who has posted over 100 tackles the past two seasons. Akin is a three-year starter at linebacker and Collins rounds out the returning starters at linebacker.

In the secondary, Adkins and Stout return at safety with Forist also seeing time at safety. Senior Daryn Shepler and sophomore Carter McKelvey will be at cornerback.

"We are looking pretty strong defensively," Stout said. "We have a lot of three-year players defensively and we've been able to install some different looks and blitzes."

With Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart playing eight-man football, the Mid-State title may come down to the week seven matchup between the Eagles and Breckenridge.



Carson City-Crystal's Drew Stout, who passed for 1,800 yards as a sophomore quarterback, moved to running back last fall and rushed for 1,871 yards and scored 20 touchdowns. (Submitted Photo)

Stout Set For Second Season At CC-C

John Raffel Sports Scene

Tim Stout is in his second season in a unique position as Carson City-Crystal football coach.

He is not on the teaching staff.

"My wife and I own two businesses in Carson City and in Crystal," he said. "Last year was my first year as the head coach at Carson City. The previous five years, I was defensive coordinator there. I've actually been with the program in my 10th season.

My son Drew was playing through the youth teams. I knew at some point in time I wanted to be a high school coach. Coach Shawn Bollinger was the head coach and I talked to him about volunteering. That was 10 years ago and that's how I got my foot in the door on the high school level."

The Eagles were 5-4 in Stout's first year

"Coach Devin Pringle had run the power T two years ago," Stout said "Coach (Ben) Brock came in and he was just here for one year.

His offense was a spread. I got hired late in the game last year, two weeks before the season started. We were making wholesale changes going from the spread back to traditionally a power run. There was quite a transition. We got off to a late start. We started out 0-2. We're winning both of those games against Saranac and Sacred Heart. But just didn't hang on. As the season progressed we got back into being who we wanted to be offensively and defensively. We won five of our next six games after starting out 0-2."



Carson City coach Tim Stout moves into this second season with the Eagles. (Submitted Photo)

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Ionia returns seven players each on both sides of the football for a team that finished 4-5 a year ago. (File Photos)

Experienced Ionia Football Team Has Its Sights Set On A Winning Season

Butch Harmon Sports Scene

While the roster size is a little smaller this season, it's a case of quality over quantity for an Ionia football team that is setting its sights on climbing above the .500 mark after turning in a 4-5 record last season.

The Bulldogs have a strong core of players returning on both sides of the football and while the varsity team has just 25 players, each player is a solid football player ready to contribute.

"These are the lowest numbers we've had in my seven years here," said Ionia coach Mike Holes, "but we do feel confident about all the guys we have and the experience they have."

Ionia returns a total of seven starters on both sides of the football. On offense, the Bulldogs are led by senior Matt

Grand-Girard (5-11, 175) who hauled in 35 passes for 691 yards and nine touchdowns last year. Slot receiver Micah Groom also returns.

A big key on offense is quarterback. The past two seasons the Bulldogs featured the passing of John Meyer who threw for 2,000 yards last year and 1,600 yards the year before. This season, Gage Taylor (5-11, 180) steps in behind center. A wide receiver last year, Taylor is an excellent all-around athlete that brings a running element to the position.

Opening holes and providing pass protection is a veteran offensive line. Senior tackle Jared Christensen (6-3, 280) is a returning three-year starter joined by Brandon Thurlby and Ben Meyer. Tight end Erik Pilkington is also a returning starter that will make an impact.

"We have a lot of experience," Holes

said. "We have five seniors who started for us as sophomores. There are still a couple of positions we have to fill and we are still working on exactly who will fill those."

Ionia's defense returns experienced players at all three levels. Scottie Currin is joined by Christensen and Thurlby along the defensive front. Senior Justice Nummer (6-2, 190) returns at defensive end with Pilkington back at inside linebacker. Brady Swinehart returns to head up the secondary along with Taylor and Grand-Girard.

"We return a number of guys on defense and look to improve on that side of the ball," Holes said. "We have a lot of guys back who played a lot of snaps last year. We're looking pretty tough on that side of the ball this year."

Big Rapids Line Power Expected To Carry Cardinals To Playoff Contention

John Raffel Sports Scene

Braeden Cummings has taken his all-state tight end talents to Central Michigan but Big Rapids coach Mike Selzer still figures on putting a Central State Activities Association title contending team on the field this season.

Big Rapids is in a tough league with the likes of Reed City and Chippewa Hills, but may have the material to have a solid team.

"We're returning all offensive

linemen, seven deep, with lots of experience," Selzer said. "It's the most physical line we have had in many years. We have experience on defense returning 8 of the 11 positions.

"Keys are to improve each practice, rely on the strength of the offensive line, and get our skill players in spaces."

The Cardinals boast outstanding linemen with Issac Lobert who, Selzer says, is "a physical player, great run blocker" plus Tom Lobert, "a smart technical player good

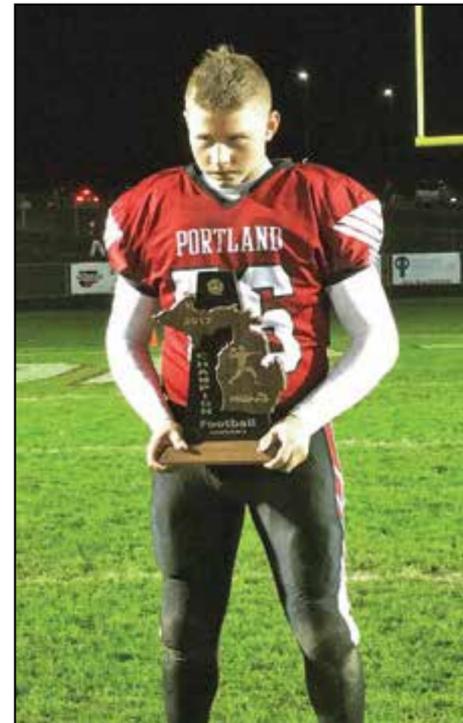
pass blocker," along with DJ Greenbay, a "very physical great run stopper," plus

Matt Zeilinger, "a good run blocker and strong pass rusher," and Jacob Alber, "a steady offensive lineman."

Elliot Blair is the leading tackler from last year and will anchor the middle of the defense and Jayden Mason will be at quarterback.

"He's a returning quarterback and a good decision maker, very athletic and with a strong arm," Selzer said.

Jayden Madson is set to be at quarterback for Big Rapids this season. (Submitted Photo)



Veteran Linemen Lead Way As Portland Gears Up To Carry On Winning Tradition

Butch Harmon Sports Scene

If it's what you have up front that counts, the Portland Raiders are in good shape entering the new season.

Four of five starters return along the offensive front for the Raiders and that experienced line leads the way for a team that turned in a 10-2 record last season. Along with winning the CAAC White title, the Raiders added a district championship before dropping a 28-26 decision to eventual Division 5 state champion Grand Rapids West Catholic in the regional title game.

"We have four out of or five offensive linemen back and we are pretty excited about that," said Portland coach John Novara. "We have some big, strong kid up front. We replace most of our skill position starters, but the big thing is getting the new starters up to game speed. The juniors didn't get a lot of playing time last year. We had some good players

Portland made it all the way to the Division 5 regional finals before losing to eventual state champion Grand Rapids West Catholic. Portland finished the 2017 season 10-2. (Submitted Photo)

behind the starters last year, they just didn't get a lot of playing time."

Senior offensive tackles Hunter Klein and Jay Davids return to anchor the offensive line along with center Matt Koster and guard Mitch Savage.

"Hunter is 6-foot-6 and 318 pounds and is getting a lot of recognition from colleges," Novara said. "Jay has been a three-year starter for us. I'm excited about them. They play really well as a unit."

Senior Jacob Hickling, a three-year starter at defensive end, will fill the opening at guard.

In the backfield, a trio of quarterbacks are vying for the starting job, including a senior and two juniors.

At running back, Jacob Veale is a promising newcomer looking to step up. Senior Owen Guilford, who was a state champion wrestler last winter, step in at fullback.

Senior Blake Patrick is a returning starter at wide receiver.

The Portland defense returns starters at all three level. Up front, senior Dylan Arthur (6-1, 310) is a three-year starter who provides a major obstacle for opposing offenses looking to run inside on the Raiders. Hickling (6-3, 205) is a three-year starter at defensive end.

Guilford returns at linebacker with Cade Parmalee (6-1, 185) returning at safety. Arthur, Hickling, Guilford and Parmalee all earned all-conference honors last season.

Portland also returns seniors Mitch Mallek and Hunter Hohman who both earned extensive playing time at cornerback last season.

"We have a solid group," Novara said. "We are not a real flashy group and the big key is how fast our backs come along offensively and defensively."

Quarterback Zach Andrews To Provide Solid Senior Leadership For Young Fulton-Middleton Football Team

David Cook Sports Scene

Led by a strong group of seniors, the Fulton-Middleton football team turned in a bounce-back season last fall. This year, how quickly the Pirates develop a new group of players will dictate if it will be another winning season.

Last year's senior group led Fulton-Middleton above the .500 mark for the first time in two years and concluded with a trip to the playoffs. This year, a large number of new faces will be found on the sidelines and how quickly

they adapt to the speed of varsity football will be a key to the season.

"Our team is going to be very young, as we have to replace 12 graduating seniors from last year's team that earned a playoff berth and finished the season 7-3 overall," said Fulton coach Paul Hungerford. "If our young players continue to improve and grow, in a very strong league, we hope to place in the top half of our league."

While young, this year's team has plenty of promising athletes who have good speed and quickness.



Andrews returns after leading the Fulton offense to an average of

35.4 points per game last season. An excellent passer, Andrews is a solid all-around athlete who is also dangerous as a runner.

"Zach broke two school records last year," Hungerford said. "His touchdown/interception ratio was 12-to-1 a year ago. We'll look to utilize his leadership and experience to lead our offense."

On the defensive side of the ball, the Pirates return senior defensive back Adam Duffo.

"Adam is a strong senior defensive back that returns after a very solid junior season

until he got injured in week six," Hungerford said. "He's fully recovered now, and we look forward to him having a nice year leading our team on the defensive side of the ball."

Fulton opens the season against Merrill before beginning league play in week two against Potterville.

"We're just looking to go to work," Hungerford said. "Our overall numbers for our program is a concern for us, thus we hope to build our numbers to solidify the program in years to come."

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New Chapter In Lowell Football Gets Set To Begin In '18

Butch Harmon Sports Scene

Friday nights will never be the same in Lowell as long-time Red Arrow coach Noel Dean hung up his whistle after 22 years of roaming the sidelines.

While Dean is gone, his presence will still be felt as all of his staff has remained, including defensive coordinator Justin Miller, who takes over as head coach.

Also the Lowell varsity baseball coach, Miller knows what makes Lowell athletes successful and the transition will be smooth.

On offense, the Red Arrows will be breaking in a new quarterback as David Kruse has moved on to Michigan State University. Senior Avry Mutschler, like Kruse an all-state wrestler, is in the mix for the starting job along with junior Brennan Pawloski (6-0, 175) and Brett Spanbauer (6-1, 170).

Lining up behind the eventual quarterback are a host of talented running

backs including senior Gabe Smith (5-10, 170) and juniors Andy Anschutz (5-7, 175), Grady McDonald (5-10, 180) and Grant Pratt (5-10, 190).

Senior veteran Jordan Dent (6-3, 210) is a big, talented target at tight end.

Up front, senior center Zack Post (5-11, 200) returns to anchor an offensive line that includes senior Chase Anderson (6-1, 230) and junior Keegan Laux (6-2, 215).

"We want to keep people off balance," Miller said. "We have so many new players that, especially early in the season, there will be an element of the unknown about us which will be a strength for us."

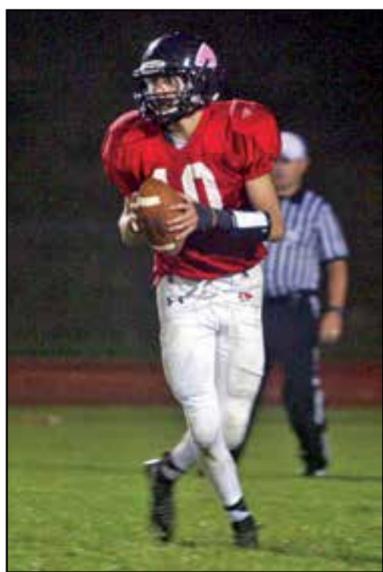
The Lowell defense will also have numerous first-time starters. Anschutz, a cornerback, is in his third year on the varsity and heads up a secondary that includes Mutschler who also has three years of varsity experience. Pawloski is in the mix at safety while junior Cade Solomonson will also see action in the secondary.

Smith and Dent are a pair of veteran linebacker while Pratt and junior Matthew Stephens will also be in the mix at linebacker.

The defensive line is a work in process with several newcomers challenging for playing time.

"Our defensive line graduated all of the starters," Miller said. "It's a wide-open competition with a lot of players competing for playing time. Our strong point on defense is our ability to adapt very quickly. Our athletes are able to rotate roles vs having to rotate somebody off the field."

The Red Arrows face a stacked schedule this season starting with a trip to Indiana to face South Bend Adams before coming home the next week to host OK Red powerhouse Rockford. The Red Arrows then face the challenging OK White Conference slate that includes last year's league champion Forest Hills Central, and last year's runner-up Cedar Springs.



Lowell will enter the season for the first time in 20 years without head coach Noel Dean. Dean announced earlier this summer he was stepping down as head coach to pursue other business opportunities. (File Photo)

Pewamo-Westphalia Looking For Encore After Back-To-Back D7 Titles

David Cook Sports Scene

With back-to-back Division 7 state championships to their credit, the question for the Pewamo-Westphalia Pirates heading into the 2018 season is, what can they do for an encore.

With a wealth of veteran linemen back along with some promising skill position players, the Pirates have the players on hand to accomplish plenty.

"We're real excited about what we have," said Pewamo-Westphalia coach Jeremy Miller. "We have 76 players from grades nine through 12 in came and we have a lot of guys back with experience on both sides of the ball."

The Pirates return a wealth of seasoned players in the trenches. On offense, all but one offensive linemen return from last year.

Seniors Nick Droste (6-0, 215), Andre Smith (6-6, 210), Noah Spitzley (5-11, 210) and Jared Thelen (6-0, 260) return along with juniors Jacob Pung (6-1, 220) and Lance Rademacher (6-3, 245). Senior Ty Schneider is also making his presence known along the line.

"Having an experienced offensive line is a luxury," Miller said. "We didn't have that last year. We had to piece together a line last year and get it to gel. I'm very happy with the amount of work the guys put in in the weight room. They've become a lot stronger."

The line will be paving the way for running backs senior Cameron Wirth and his cousin, junior Hunter Wirth. Cameron Wirth is a returning standout at fullback while Hunter Wirth led the team in rushing last year.

At quarterback, a pair of seniors are in the mix. Senior Alec Thelen

is a solid running quarterback while senior Nate Wirth is more of a traditional drop-back passer with a strong arm.

At receiver, senior Adam Bears (6-4, 190) is a rangy target with good hands that will provide an impact in the passing game.

On defense, Pewamo-Westphalia returns eight starters from a unit that posted seven shutouts and allowed 6.2 points per game.

In the secondary, Nate Wirth and Grant Stump return at safety along with seniors Alec Thelen and Evan Thelen. At linebacker, junior Carter Thelen returns with Cameron Wirth and Pung. Junior defensive lineman Jared Thelen returns up front along with Rademacher.

While last year's seniors will be missed for their performances on the field, the leadership they brought to the team will be missed as much if not more.



Pewamo-Westphalia enters the season chasing its third straight Division 7 championship. The Pirates open the year against Ithaca. (File Photo)

"The big thing for us is that we have to replace a core group of seniors that were part of two state championships," Miller said. "We have to replace their leadership and the way they went about things."

Any sense of complacency was swept away in the offseason when the team looked at the week one opponent. Pewamo-Westphalia opens the new season at Alma College where it will face Division

6 powerhouse Ithaca.

"You can feel the excitement in the area for that game," Miller said. "People are talking about it. It has got the players attention. Anytime you play a school and a program like Ithaca you better be motivated. I tell our players all the time that you can be sure the Ithaca kids are preparing for this game."

Veteran Linemen To Lead Way For St. Louis Football Team

Butch Harmon Sports Scene

After one of the most memorable football seasons in school history last fall, what can the St. Louis Sharks do for an encore this season?

While the Sharks were hit hard by graduation, the return of some veteran linemen has the team determined to build on last year's success. Those linemen helped St. Louis turn in a 6-5 record last year. St. Louis qualified for the state playoffs for the first time in school history last fall along with winning the first-ever playoff game in school history before falling to Breckenridge in the district finals.

Offensively, St. Louis returns four of last year's five starting linemen. Senior tackle Daniel Oswald (6-4, 215) anchors a veteran offensive line that includes guards Ean Bradley (5-10, 215) and Luke Maxwell (5-10, 195) and center Jake Brown (5-11, 170).

While the line is experienced, new starters are in place at the skill

positions. At quarterback, senior Cameron Mizer (6-2, 160) is a dual-threat athlete who saw playing time in several games last year.

"Cameron has an accurate arm and saw some snaps in several games last year," said St. Louis coach Aaron Munderloh. "He is more than capable of running the ball and has done well in camp so far."

At tailback, senior Marcus Long (5-9, 185) and junior Jordan Lowe (6-0, 175) will handle the bulk of the carries. Long is a three-year varsity player who runs with power while Lowe was the main back on the junior varsity last fall and is more of a cutback runner.

Senior Ryan Downs (5-7, 165) steps in at H-back with Patrick Hanley and Liam Morrow working at slot back.

"We have to replace a lot of kids this year off last year's team," Munderloh said. "We have to replace seven on offense and seven on defense. There is a lot of change this year. We have a lot of new opportunities for kids to step into

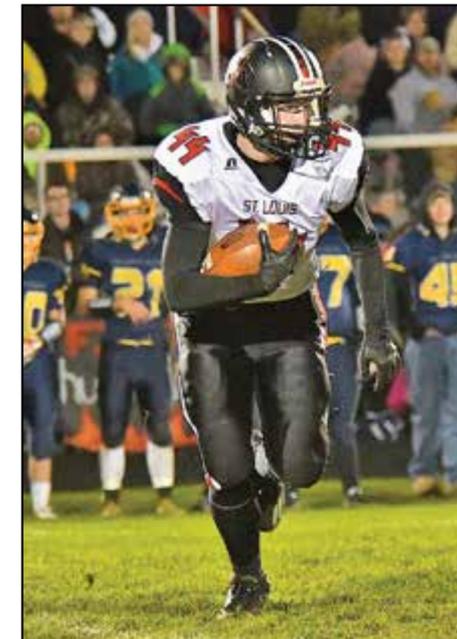
new roles and starting roles."

On the defensive side of the football, Oswald returns at defensive tackle and Downs is back at defensive end. A pair of starters return in the secondary with senior Angel Rojas and Hanley manning the cornerback spots.

"Our defensive line should be pretty solid," Munderloh said. "We have some good-sized young men that will hold the fort down. We have some youth at linebacker, but the entire two-deep at linebacker are kids who have played linebacker before."

With the veterans returning and the young talent coming up, the Sharks are looking forward to building on last year's success.

"It's always nice to finish the season on a high note," Munderloh said. "We had a great season last year and it was nice for our program to get to the playoffs. We had a good offseason and 7-on-7s this summer, but it's always fun when August rolls around and we put the pads on and get the season going."



St. Louis turned in a 6-5 record last year and qualified for the state playoffs for the first time in school history. (File Photo)



Matthew Peterson Hopes To Turn Things Around At Heritage

John Raffel Sports Scene

Matthew Peterson is ready to take on new challenges as football coach at Saginaw Heritage.

The team has been 2-7 and 3-6 the past two years.

Peterson the last four years was coaching at Midland Dow as an assistant coach.

But the opportunity at

Heritage's Keagan Robertson returns at quarterback for new coach Matthew Peterson. (File Photo)

Heritage was too much to pass up.

"I've always wanted to be a head coach," he said. "I felt it was the right next step for me. I applied to two other schools. One thing led to another and they offered me a job. I felt it was the right time to take it."

Peterson took the job in January. He is only coaching at Heritage.

The kids want to be

comfortable with the coaching staff and know the expectations," he said. "The No. 1 priority is establishing relationships with the kids, giving them clear expectations on how things are supposed to be done and what we're expecting from them work wise and stuff like that."

Peterson indicated he's not making a "lot" of changes.

"Defense will be very similar to what they ran last year," Peterson said. "The offense

will be different. It will be little changes, not major ones."

He anticipates between 40 and 45 varsity players.

"We definitely want to win some games," Peterson said. "We want to focus on getting better every single game and see where it takes us I want to get better every game. If we worry about ourselves, we'll make some progress." that you can be sure the Ithaca kids are preparing for this game."

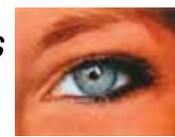


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Humm, Alward Return To Give Alma A Dual Threat In Backfield

David Cook Sports Scene

When it comes to a one-two punch on offense, the Alma Panthers have a quarterback/running back combination that is as good as any in Mid-Michigan.

Back for their third season on the varsity, senior quarterback

Drew Humm and senior running back Brec Alward provide Alma's offense with the ability to pile up yardage both in the air or on the ground.

Last season Alward (5-10, 175) carried the football 203 times for 1,321 yards (6.5 avg.) and 21 touchdowns on his way to earning Division 3-4 Second Team All-State honors. Alward also scored three touchdowns receiving, two on kickoffs and one touchdown on defense.

"Brec is looking good," said Alma coach Dan Falor. "He works hard and had a good offseason. He's ready to go."

Humm is coming off a season that saw hit complete 73-of-111 passes for 1,292 yards and 14 touchdowns during the regular season and helped the Panthers reach the district finals in last year's state playoffs.

"I think Drew has really

improved his arm strength," Falor said. "He is a senior in his third-year who makes good decisions on the field and throws the ball around."

While Alward and Humm return, the Panthers were hit hard by graduation along the offensive line and in the receiving corps.

"We lost 16 or 17 seniors from last year," Falor said. "We lost a lot. We graduated our whole starting offensive line from last year and that is a big concern for us. We have a lot of fresh faces."

One of those new faces is Isaiah Castillo (5-9, 210) who moved into the district last year. Seniors

Colton Schworer and Jon Bader saw some playing time up front last year and will be part of the new-look offensive line with Castillo.

Senior Marcus Owens (6-0, 175) is a returning receiver who gained plenty of reps as a spot starter last season.

Alma's defense enters the season with several returning starters. Schworer, a linebacker, is the top returning tackler after totaling 86 tackles during the regular season. Owens also returns as a starting linebacker. Both Alward and Humm return to starting roles in the secondary where Humm



Alma returns one of the top senior duos in running back Brec Alward (above) and quarterback Drew Humm (left). The duo combined for nearly 40 touchdowns a season ago. (Nick Rethman and Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photos)

totaled 78 tackles last year. Jacob Omans also returns as a starter in the secondary. Bader is a returning starter along the defensive line.

"Our defense is a lot more athletic that we've been the last few years," Falor said. "Our linebacking crew is pretty athletic. We're more confident with the number of starters that return on that side of the ball."

Change is also in store when it comes to the schedule. With the Tri-Valley Conference Central down to six teams, Alma has five conference games scheduled with four non-conference games. That schedule will provide the Panthers with plenty of challenges.

"We're in a tough league," Falor said. "You have Swan Valley, Freeland and Standish-Sterling

and we have a couple of tough crossover games against Bridgeport and Millington. It's a tough schedule.

I'm pleased with what I've seen so far in camp. We have some spirited competition going on with a couple of positions wide open. The kids are competing well and it's going to be exciting to see how things go."

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Building Momentum Swan Valley Out To Prove That Last Year Was No Fluke; Vikings Building Towards Return Trip To Ford Field

Scott Salowich Sports Scene

As Swan Valley can attest, getting to the state championship game is pretty cool.

The Vikings made it all the way to Ford Field for the first time in school history last fall, only to lose to Grand Rapids West Catholic 34-7 in the title bout.

"It was bittersweet because of the way the game turned out, but it was still a great thrill," said Swan Valley coach Kevin Gavenda. "We had awhile to think about things before our banquet and, as we looked back, the journey was just so much fun.

"We had the team together for Saturday morning breakfasts before the games and we had police escorts for the buses heading to the games and just a lot of great experiences. Then, we put up a banner in our school. We wish it said state champions, but it still says state finalists and that's

pretty good."

The key to all that is how Gavenda framed everything in terms of hindsight, in terms of embracing the memories after the fact at the banquet and beyond.

When the whole thing was actually going on, having fun and enjoying life are luxuries that elude coaches and players who have to play 14 games in 14 weeks to get to Ford Field.

To put that grind in perspective, take a look at the schedules of your favorite NFL or college football team. They have armies of coaches, trainers, doctors, nutritionists, advisers, lawyers and everything else and none of them play 14 games in 14 weeks.

The Vikings did it, they want to do it again and, now, they know how.

"We go to defense camp with Muskegon every summer and they've been to the state finals like five times in a row," Gavenda

said. "Their coaches told me that one thing they've found is how important it is to get your starters rest whenever you can get them rest."

"They had a kid who was Mr. Football and they would either pull him out, or tell him to make sure to get out of bounds at the end of as many plays as he could. If a guy can avoid 5-10 shots a game, it might save him 50-100 hits a season and that definitely means a lot to a 16- or 17-year-old body."

That sounds simple, but it is not the kind of strategy the average coaching staff needs to consider. Most teams are plugging holes and trying to find any edge to win just enough games to keep everyone happy and the program moving one step ahead of the experts on Twitter who think they should have gone for it on fourth-down-and-17 from their own 10.

Last year's Vikings could have

definitely used some of those banked hits. By the final game, Swan Valley had more subs than Tubby's in the lineup.

"I'm not making any excuses because those guys deserved to win the game, but we were extremely beat up by the end," Gavenda said. "We lost our leading wide receiver and running back in the first round and they came back in the semis wearing big braces, but they were not 100 percent. The guys who took over did great jobs, but we had seven kids who didn't practice all week and that made it really tough."

For a lot of programs, after the going got that tough, the tough would get going and the graduation of a bunch of generational players would leave gaping holes in the lineup.

At Swan Valley? No way.

The Vikings are as talented as ever and primed to parlay the experience of last year's run to this year's fun.

"Ultimately, we only have one goal and that is to win the state championship," Gavenda said. "Is there pressure on us? Yes. Expectations are high and we know it, but the



Senior Brock Leinberger is expected to play a huge role in Swan Valley's offensive scheme this season. (Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photo)

Vets, Youth Has Midland High Believing Entering 2018 Season

Scott Keyes Sports Scene

After finishing a respectable 8-2 a year ago, including a playoff berth, the 2018 Midland High football team will rely on a strong mix of veterans and youth as it continues to chase the coveted Saginaw Valley Conference Blue Division title.

"This summer was really cool watching last year's underclassman come into camp as seniors and watch the rest of the team grow during 7-on-7s," said Midland High coach Eric Methner.

"We had a pretty good season a

is capable of spreading teams out with his arm and legs and is able to make the big throws."

Methner will also rely on a revolving backfield of players that consists of Christian Gordon, Carter Grove and junior Tommy Johnstone among other players that could likely line up in the backfield.

"Christian is a dynamic player with a great motor and he plays extremely fast," Methner said.

Luckily for the Chemics all five of last year's offensive line is intact led by Cam White and Ethan Volmering.

Meanwhile a strong junior class could be the difference between a strong season and a spectacular campaign. However it will depend on you quick the junior class can develop.

"The biggest obstacle can be the development of our incoming juniors and other underclassman up to speed," Methner said. When you have kids like a Tommy Johnstone that ran close to 2,000 yards a year ago on JV it's a matter to how quick guys like him adapt. For some it could be one game for others it could be two or three games. It really depends on the player. We practice at a fast pace and hopefully that gets the underclassman up to speed as a whole."

Johnstone agrees.

"The speed of the game along with going up against more experienced and talented players can be a challenge," Johnstone said.

"For me I just want to fill in any role I can to help the team improve and win games."



Midland High senior Christian Gordon is expected to carry the load in the Chemics backfield this season. (Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photo)

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Football: A Family Affair For Townsend Family

Scott Salowich Sports Scene

This season will be the sixth in a row that Freeland coach Kevin Townsend will have at least one of his sons on the roster.

It will also be the last.

Zach finished his career two years ago, bowing out as an All-State cornerback with seven interceptions in his final campaign. Jack is a senior now. Like his brother, he will be a team captain and he will see action at wide receiver and outside linebacker.

Their dad can already hear the clock ticking.

"I will be an emotional wreck," Townsend said. "I was emotional when Zach played his last game and I am 100 percent sure I will be for Jack's as well. I just hope we get to play it at Ford Field."

Balancing the whole dad/coach issue can be tricky.

Unlike most parents of players, Townsend can hardly call the coach to gripe about issues like

playing time and early-morning practices. He is well aware that any sort of favoritism toward his own kids would be controversial and also that there is another side to that coin.

"Sometimes coaches can be harder on their own sons than the rest of the team," he said. "I have to be careful about that because we end up going home together every night and you have to have peace in the family."

Besides, it's not like he is following his kids around the practice field all day. If they need a pat on the back or a little extra motivation, the staff can take care of that.

"I coach running backs," he said. "If I'm out there talking to Jack, who's watching the running backs? If he has a bad practice, his position coach will get on him and it was the same way with Zach."

The whole "snitch" concept is also something Townsend has addressed.

With players that live under his roof in the locker room with

everybody else, he has spies embedded who are apt to see and hear everything that goes on.

Spies who are, for obvious reasons, not crazy about ratting out their friends.

"If there is going to be a big party on a Saturday night, my boys are going to tell me," said Townsend. "If one of the players gets in trouble at the party and I find out about it, he might think they told on him.

"To try and avoid that situation, I just tell them all that we live in a small town where everybody knows everybody else and, between that and social media, if anyone is doing things they are not supposed to, I will find out."

As much as Townsend has enjoyed coaching his sons in the fall, he has also embraced taking to the bleachers in the winter and spring, as evidenced by the way he snaps off comments about his kids' exploits playing basketball and running track.

"There are a lot of All-State Teams out there and Zach made one his senior year. He deserved it, but he wouldn't have been on there if I hadn't nominated him," Townsend said. "He was All-State in track, too. He wasn't even seeded in the top 10, but he wound up fifth

in the high hurdles at the state meet, so he went out and got that himself"

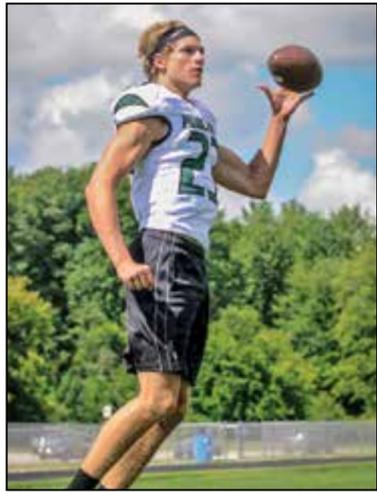
Zach is currently running indoor track at Saginaw Valley State and pursuing a career in nursing.

As for Jack, well his old man won't soon forget the night this past spring when he conjured up a little March Madness.

"It was a Friday night game at Swan Valley for the district championship," Townsend said. "With time running out, Jack stole the ball, took off and made a two-handed dunk for the first time in his life. Well, you know the effect dunks can have in a high school basketball game."

Jack has ideas of playing football in college, with Wayne State as a possible destination.

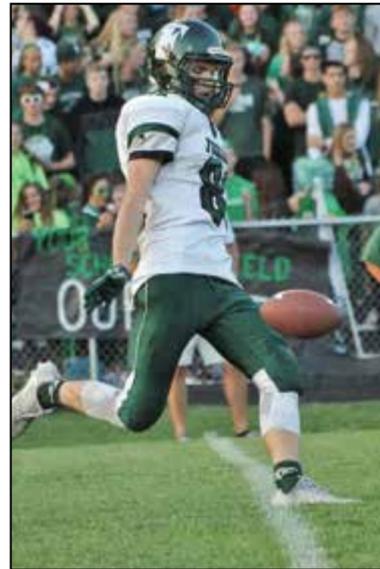
No matter what happens in Freeland's final familial football fall, Townsend plans to keep



Jack Townsend

leading the Falcons after Jack leaves the nest.

"A lot of people have asked me if I'm done when the kids leave," he said. "If I looked around and thought the freshman, sophomore and junior classes were bad, I probably would be. But, they're not. We've got a lot of good kids coming up who have grown up with my boys, so I'm not going anywhere."



Bourcier A Jack Of All Trades For Freeland

Scott Salowich Sports Scene

Freeland has made the playoffs 10 years in a row and, if the Falcons make it again this season, it might be by just a foot.

That foot belongs to Jayce Bourcier.

The senior is a talented tight end and also plays some safety, but his skills as a rugby-style punter are off the charts.

It's a relatively new concept at Freeland, one that was frankly stolen by Coach Kevin Townsend.

"We lost a playoff game to Lansing Catholic Central a couple years ago and they had a rugby-style punter and it seemed like their special teams kept

making us go 80 or 90 yards to score," Townsend said, "and here we were just punting it right down the middle of the field to the fastest kid on their team."

Not anymore.

Now, on fourth-down-and-whatever from anywhere on the field, Bourcier will take the snap and roll. He can run. He can pass. He can pooch one down inside the 10. Or, he might just rip off another 78-yard thunderbolt like he did last season.

"Jayce can flip the field," said Townsend, "and that definitely has an impact on what we're doing during the course of the game."

Bourcier and Jack Townsend are the team captains and the Falcons will also

be led by fellow seniors Layne Moergeli, who plays fullback and middle linebacker; Josiah Murphy, who is at tight end and corner back; and Joe Melzo, a left tackle/linebacker.

The quarterback will be junior Elijah Vlassis.

"We'd love to win our league and get back into the playoffs and, hopefully, host a game or two," said Kevin Townsend. "We would like to take a step forward. We've made the playoffs all these years, which proves we're doing something right, but we haven't won a regional yet because it seems like we run into a juggernaut most times. All we can do is get back in and take it from there."

Freeland's Jayce Bourcier was an All-State punter for the Falcons last season. (File Photo)

Beaverton Hopes To Build On Last Season's Success In 2018

Scott Salowich Sports Scene

After trudging through a period of just two winning seasons in 26 years, Beaverton finally made it back to the playoffs in 2016 and got the townspeople talking football for a change.

The Beavers had created a buzz that lasted until the kickoff of last year's campaign and they kept the good times rolling, winning the first eight games to lock up a return to the playoffs and set up a showdown with Clare in week 9 for the Jack Pine Conference championship.

The Pioneers won big and then the Beavers were ousted from the

playoffs a week later.

It stung, but you can only play important games if you are good enough to qualify for them.

Beaverton has entered that world and wants to stay there. "Losing a football game is the worst feeling in the world, but you've got to learn to deal with that," said Beavers coach Aaron Seiser. "Very few teams end the season with a win. For everyone else, there are positive things that happen in a loss and you just have to keep working and build on them."

Seiser may not have liked losing those last two, but it wasn't like he was over the moon with excitement

about the first eight, either.

"We never discussed our record during the season," he said. "Even though a lot of people were talking about us being undefeated and we were getting questions from the media, we never spoke about it. We just wanted to keep getting better."

A new season is ready to begin and the same people who wanted to know if the Beavers could make it to the playoffs in back-to-back years are now wondering about back-to-back-to-back.

Seiser is just as curious.

"Every year is different, no matter who you bring back from the year before," he said. "I'm happy with



Beaverton is hoping to make it three straight seasons of making the playoffs this year. (File Photo)

the players we have returning and I'm happy with some of the guys we brought up from the JV and I think all of them are working hard.

"People are excited and the kids have high expectations, but nothing is going to be given to us because we've had a couple good seasons.

Bridgeport Gridders Enter 2018 With A New Reputation

Scott Keyes Sports Scene

For many sports teams, improved performance results in challenges that are more challenging.

Bridgeport High's football squad will face this type of scenario in 2018 after qualifying last fall for the state playoffs for the first time since 1999.

"So now people know who we are," notes third-year Coach Kevin Marshall. "We expect them to come at us in that way. At the same time, we want more.

This time we want to host our own playoff game, and we want to win our own playoff game."

In last year's postseason opener, the Bearcats were steamrolled at Swan Valley, 59-22, but they looked back on the regular season success of winning the Tri-Valley East crown.

Marshall, who started by coaching Bridgeport's junior varsity in 2016 and coached previously at Saginaw city schools, realizes he will need improved line play on both sides of the ball, while to keep rivals off the scoreboard and

to provide protection for two primary weapons on offense.

They are wide receiver SirQuarius Ball (6-5, 175), who rises to snare passes in the same style that he battles for rebounds in his other top sport, basketball, and run-pass quarterback Markele Garrett (6-1, 170). Both are grabbing attention from college recruiters and from rival Tri-Valley coaches.

In order to offer a balanced attack, Marshall will look for a ground game led by halfback Brandon Genwright II (5-9, 180) and a pass-catching alternative from Ramone Keels Jr. (6-2, 190).

"We haven't thrown to the tight end very much in the past," the coach says, "but with Ramone in that position and with Markele throwing, you'll see more of that from us."

Defensive anchors will be standout pass rusher Jady Parker (6-3, 230), a Tri-Valley leader in quarterback sacks the past two seasons, and Bobby Martin-Brooks Jr. (6-1, 215) at middle linebacker. On offense, Parker will man a tackle slot while Martin-Brooks will anchor the line at center. Meanwhile, on defense, Bearcats fans will see Ball double up at defensive back, Garrett at free safety, Genwright at strong safety and Keels at defensive end.

Keels is an 11th-grader, while the remaining core players are seniors.

This season, Bridgeport won't surprise any foes. In fact, the Bearcats' first six opponents joined them in last season's playoffs. In what loom as top Tri-Valley East games, they host Frankenmuth on Sept. 7 and visit Millington on Sept. 28.



Markele Garrett

Bridgeport Star Wasn't Always Tall, But He Excels In Both Football And Basketball

Scott Keyes Sports Scene

Basketball and football both are team sports, but in basketball we have multiple passes of the ball, while in football it's only one at a time.

Bridgeport High senior SirQuarius Ball is a standout in both, and he says basketball helps him apply team concepts in football.

"I can go make a block for someone else when they have the ball," he says. "That's something I need to work on, being a better teammate.

"I can also be more vocal, like we are in basketball. I need to take a bigger leadership role, now that I'm a senior."

As a junior, Ball was a leader while the Bearcats achieved historic success in both sports. The football team achieved the state playoffs for the first time since 1999, and then the hoopsters won the school's first-ever regional crown while finishing 24-2. He was a key player in both achievements, and once was named Saginaw News Player of the Week.

College recruiters are pitching SirQuarius in both sports, but he's getting the most attention in football,

which has been his narrow favorite ever since he broke loose for a pair of long touchdown runs in a youth flag football championship games.

His mom, Shelisa Ball, ran track in middle school and is a fan of sports at all levels.

"I was the one who started him playing sports when he was younger," she recalls, "We would get up during early mornings and pull the rim out and shoot around and throw the football to each other every day."

College recruiters are pitching Sirquarius in both sports, but he's getting the most attention in football, which has been his narrow favorite ever since he broke loose for a pair of long touchdown runs in a youth flag football championship games.

At 6-foot-5, he shows the agility of a smaller athlete. Part of the reason is that he actually was smaller, until he went through a middle-school growth spurt. Friends teased him, but he says he now enjoys the height advantage as a rangy pass catcher similar to many taller pros who outleap smaller defensive backs.

SirQuarius is interested in trying to play both sports in college, which would be more possible at a smaller school, such as Saginaw Valley, Grand Valley or Ferris. He intends to study and pursue a career in computer engineering.

How did he receive his unique name? "My grandmother (Tammi Ball-Davis) has always wanted me to be respected, and to respect myself," he says. "by having the title, 'Sir.'"



Sirquarius Ball

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Ithaca Football Team Hungry, Motivated Headed Into 2018 Season

Butch Harmon Sports Scene

When it comes to offseason motivation, the Ithaca football team had plenty of it.

Not only did the Yellowjackets have the bad taste in their mouths from the close loss to Jackson Lumen Christi in last year's Division 6 state championship game, but looking forward, they open the season in a huge way when they square off against two-time, defending Division 7 state champion Pewamo-Westphalia in a game taking place at Alma College on Friday, August 24.

Ithaca compiled a 13-1 record last season. The Yellowjackets reached the Division 6 state finals for the seventh time since 2010 and saw a spirited rally fall just short in dropping a 40-34 decision to Lumen Christi. While a large group of seniors graduated from that squad, the rest of the squad has used the defeat as motivation for another title run this year.

"Our players are hungry," said Ithaca head coach Terry Hessbrook. "Our season did not end the way we all wanted it to end last year. We came up just short vs Lumen Christi and that will be in the back of our players' minds."

Also on the minds of the players in the much-anticipated season opener against Pewamo-Westphalia, winners of the past two Division 7 state titles and a team that brings back a large group of veterans.

While the Yellowjackets have a large core of players returning, they are light on experience at the offensive skill positions. Led by quarterback Joey Bentley who is now at Hillsdale College, Ithaca averaged a whopping 45.9 points per game last year. For the Yellowjackets to continue that kind of production plenty of work needs to be put in by a promising group of talented young players.

"We are very excited to get back on the field and get started," Hessbrook said. "We will be a very young team at our skilled positions."

Two players to keep an eye on at the skill positions are junior Peyton Smith and sophomore Brady Hessbrook. Hessbrook is a talented dual-threat quarterback who

saw action last year as Bentley's backup while Smith is an athletic quarterback with a strong arm that is ranked among the top junior quarterbacks in the state. Smith is the younger brother of former Ithaca All-State quarterbacks Jake and Travis Smith.

Both Smith and Hessbrook can also play wide receiver.

The Yellowjackets are deep at receiver with senior Derek Pendell, Hunter Beck and sophomore Zach Poff all in the mix.

At running back, junior Brayden Shaw is a returning second-team, all-conference player. A three-year varsity starter, Shaw rushed for 579 yards (8.2 avg.) and five touchdowns last season.

An area the Yellowjackets have plenty of experience returning is along the trenches.

"Our strong points will be our offensive and defensive line play," Hessbrook said. "Most of the players on our line have either started or seen extended playing time last year."

Among the players to watch along the offensive front include senior Rexton Nowakowski (6-0, 210) and junior Chanc McCormack (5-10, 220).

On the defensive side of the football, McCormack returns along the defensive front. Nowakowski and Poff (5-8, 175) return at linebacker along with sophomore Derek Draher (6-0, 200).

"The strong point of our defense will be our front seven," Hessbrook said.

In the secondary, Beck (5-10, 190) is a returning all-conference player who totaled 59 tackles last season. Brady Hessbrook started 10 games in the secondary as a freshman last year. Pendell and Smith will also see action in the secondary.

With the mix of the talented young players and experience in the trenches, the Yellowjackets have the makings of another team capable of reaching Ford Field provided the team works as one.

"The key to a successful season for us will be everyone coming together and working together to get the results we want," Hessbrook said.



Peyton Smith (No. 7), Brady Hessbrook (No. 5) and Brayden Shaw (No. 40) are three Ithaca underclassmen that will attempt to help the Yellowjackets make it back to Ford Field for the eighth time in 10 seasons. Although Ithaca has only 22 players on the roster this season, expect the Yellowjackets to be right there in the mix come playoff time. (Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photo)

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FIND NEW ROADS

10 INTRIGUING STORYLINES TO PAY ATTENTION TO DURING 2018 SEASON



Butch Harmon Sports Scene

Are you ready for some football?

Here at High School Sports Scene we've been ready for high school football to begin just about since the last snow melted away in April. Kickoff is now hours away and with it the staff at High School Sports Scene has compiled a list of 10 things to watch for this season.

THE ITHACA STREAK Ithaca enters the season having won 73 consecutive regular-season football games. The streak began on October 23, 2009. Hudson High School holds the Michigan high school record with 81 consecutive regular season wins. The Yellowjackets can tie the streak in week 8 when they host Saginaw Michigan Lutheran Seminary. A win in that game and Ithaca can set the new record in the final game of the regular season at home against Carrollton.

ITHACA VS PEWAMO-WESTPHALIA To continue the winning streak Ithaca must get past two-time, defending Division 7 state champion Pewamo-Westphalia. The two small-school Michigan powerhouses collide on Friday, August, 24th at Alma College to kick off the new season in a huge way. The interest in this game is huge in the Mid-Michigan area and Alma will be the place to be to ring in the new high school football year in a memorable way.

PEWAMO-WESTPHALIA'S QUEST FOR THREE IN A ROW The Pirates have won the past two Division 7 state championships. Can they make it three in a row? The opener against Ithaca will be a great measuring stick, but no matter the outcome Pewamo-Westphalia returns a slew of veteran players, especially along the offensive and defensive lines. There is also experienced talent in the backfield and a pair of quarterbacks working hard to earn the starting berth.

AN ENCORE FOR SAGINAW SWAN VALLEY The Vikings reached the Division 5 state finals last season. The question now is can Swan Valley do it again? Quarterback Alex Fries is one of the top quarterbacks in the area and has plenty of familiar faces returning with him to make another long playoff run. Swan Valley will find out just how strong they are as they open the season with the rugged trio of Cedar Springs, Frankenmuth and Freeland.

CHANGE IN THE CAPITAL AREA ATHLETIC CONFERENCE The CAAC has a new look this year and that change has the makings of some thrilling league races. DeWitt moves up to the CAAC Blue and the Panthers will have some blockbusters in the league with Grand Ledge, Holt and East Lansing. The CAAC Red will be up for grabs with holdovers Haslett and St. Johns zeroing in on a league title along with newcomer Williamston. In the CAAC White, defending champion Portland will battle it out with familiar foe Lansing Catholic Central for league supremacy.

EXPANDING 8-MAN FOOTBALL Slowly and surely, 8-man football continues to grow in Michigan. This year Mt. Pleasant Sacred Heart takes the plunge. Area schools like Portland St. Patrick and Morrice have experienced success in 8-man football and Sacred Heart's outstanding tradition will carry on in the 8-man game which continues to grow.

ST. LOUIS' QUEST TO RETURN TO THE PLAYOFF It was a memorable football season for the Sharks last fall. Not only did St. Louis qualify for the playoffs for the first time in program history, but it also won its first playoff game. Plenty of talent returns in the trenches and if the skill players get up to speed quickly the Sharks could be looking to strike again come playoff time.

LOWELL FOOTBALL WITHOUT NOEL DEAN Legendary Lowell head coach Noel Dean hung up his whistle this summer and dove into the world of business head first. What will Friday nights be in the Showboat City without Dean?

THE MID-MICHIGAN ACTIVITIES CONFERENCE The newest league in the area, the MMAC brings in some outstanding football programs and renews some fun rivalries. New Lothrop and Montrose brings strong programs to the league as do Ovid-Elsie, Chesaning and Byron.

THE DRIVE FOR FORD FIELD Who will be left standing on the field at Ford Field playing for state titles Thanksgiving? It's early, but watch for teams like Ithaca, Pewamo-Westphalia, New Lothrop, Swan Valley to make strong runs. Teams like DeWitt, Portland, Rockford, Haslett, Freeland, Breckenridge and Carson City-Crystal have the talent for deep playoff runs as well.

Ithaca, Swan Valley, Saginaw Nouvel and Pewamo-Westphalia are four teams that made it to Ford Field a year ago. It should be interesting to see if any of those teams can make it back to the finals this season. (File Photos)

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SPORTS SCENE'S TOP SENIORS TO WATCH



Drew Humm
- Alma



Sirquarious Ball
- Bridgeport



Carter Staley
- Breckenridge



Alex Fries
- Swan Valley



Jack Townsend, Lanye Moergeli, Jayce Bourcier
- Freeland

- Aidan Harrison 6'3", 180, S, New Lothrop**
A ball-hawking safety that has committed to the University of Missouri, Harrison will make a big impact this season at New Lothrop.
- Jacob Eskilsen 6'5", 304, OL, Hemlock**
Eskilsen is developing into one of the premier linemen in the state and is being recruited by a number of MAC and GLIAC schools.
- Broderick Jordan 6'3", 288, OL, Okemos**
A two-time, all-conference player, Jordan is part of a solid offensive line evolving at Okemos.
- Konner Near 6'1", 220, RB/LB, St. Johns**
A standout on both sides of the ball, Near rushed for close to 1,400 yards last season.
- Jonah Erickson 6'5", 296, OL, Rockford**
The Rams have a long history of producing outstanding offensive linemen and Erickson is next in line.
- Kobe Hayward 6'0", 200, RB, East Lansing**
Hayward ran for 985 yards last season and is poised for an even bigger season this fall.
- Hunter Klein 6'6", 318, OT, Portland**
A massive offensive tackle with upside that has several college programs taking interest.
- Drew Humm 6'3", 180, QB, Alma**
After a productive junior season, Humm is poised to take his game to the next level this fall.
- Hunter Smith 6'2", 265, OL/DL, Breckenridge**
An athletic big man, Smith totaled over 130 tackles last season in leading the Huskies to the playoffs.
- Drew Stout 6'2", 185, QB, Carson City-Crystal**
An outstanding all-around athlete, Stout rushed for 1,871 yards and scored 20 touchdowns last season.

OTHER SENIORS TO WATCH

Name	H	W	P	School
Brec Alward	5'10"	180	RB	Alma
Isaiah Schafer	6'3"	265	OL	Pewamo-Westphalia
Jason Tunstall	6'3"	265	OL	New Lothrop
David Michael Peterson	6'2"	180	QB	Holt
Case Conley	6'6"	185	WR	Williamston
Joshua Kramer	6'0"	187	WR/DB	Lansing Catholic
Alex Fries	6'3"	180	QB	Swan Valley
Brett Beyer	6'4"	225	DE	Bay City Central
Noah Smith	6'0"	185	DB	Lansing Everett
Chris Hutsell	6'6"	285	OL	Okemos
Benjamin Brittain	5'10"	180	RB/DB	Haslett

Name	H	W	P	School
Jackson Ostrowsky	6'0"	195	QB	Mt. Pleasant
Evan Morris	6'5"	195	PPK	Ovid-Elsie
Jordan Dent	6'3"	205	TE/DE	Lowell
Carter Staley	6'0"	195	QB	Breckenridge
Terryon Liddell	5'11"	160	RB/DB	Swan Valley
Chase Mendoza	5'8"	185	RB/DB	Swan Valley
Jacob Fritz	6'3"	245	OL/DL	MP Sacred Heart
Jack Townsend	6'4"	195	WR	Freeland
Jace Bourcier	6'5"	190	WR/P	Freeland
Sirquarious Ball	6'5"	190	WR	Bridgeport
Markele Garrett	6'2"	175	QB/FS	Bridgeport
Jared Christensen	6'3"	280	OL	Ionia

SPORTS SCENE'S TOP JUNIORS TO WATCH



Lance Wiltsie
- MLS



Carson Berenyi
- Swan Valley



Peyton Smith
- Ithaca



Brayden Shaw
- Ithaca

- Devell Washington 6'4", 205, WR, Bay City Central**
Washington is a big-sized receiver with game-breaking skills that is being looked at by a number of Big Ten schools.
- Tyler Huenemann 6'3", 245, DE, Mt. Pleasant**
An outstanding all-around athlete with good size and quickness, Huenemann totaled 86 tackles and 14 sacks last season.
- Eli Haidamous 6'3", 270, OL, Holt**
Haidamous has the size, strength (300-pound bench press) and quickness (5.2 40-yard dash) to make a big impact this season.
- Brayden Shaw 6'1", 215, RB/LB, Ithaca**
Shaw is a big-time hitter at linebacker who also rushed for 579 yards last season.
- Eli Haddad 5'10", 170, WR/DBC, Rockford**
A starter for the Rams as a sophomore, Haddad is a standout sprinter on the track team with game-breaking skills.
- Charles Allen 6'2", 190, WR, Holt**
A physical receiver with good speed, Allen is also a playmaker on defense for the Rams.
- Aiden Train 6'4", 275, OL/DL, Central-Montcalm**
A starter as a freshman at both center and nose guard, Train is poised to take the next step this season after a strong sophomore year.
- Ethan Champney 6'3", 180, WR/DB, Saginaw Swan Valley**
A versatile talent, Champney impacted the passing game on both sides of the ball last fall.
- Zamarion Foster 6'1", 190, QB, Saginaw Arthur Hill**
A starter as a freshman, Foster turned in a solid sophomore season and is set to take his game to the next level.
- Evan Egan 6'8", 325, OL, Durand**
A mammoth offensive lineman with good athleticism, Egan ran a 5.1 40-yard dash at the Ohio State camp this summer.

OTHER JUNIORS TO WATCH

Name	H	W	P	School
Carson Berenyi	6'2"	240	OL/DL	Swan Valley
Peyton Bruce	6'0"	220	LB/FB	Holt
Nehemiah Jones	5'11"	211	OLB	Saginaw Arthur Hill
Matthew Laudenslager	5'10"	205	LB	Greenville
Joseph Martinez	5'10"	165	WR	Holt
Evan Metiva	6'1"	225	DE/TE	Midland Dow
Damarius Mills	5'10"	280	DT/OL	Saginaw Arthur Hill
Jamal Mills	5'11"	225	LB/FB	East Lansing
Zaiden Mitchell	5'10"	175	CB/WR	Saginaw Nouvel
Avery Moore	6'2"	207	QB	New Lothrop
Joseph Ostrowsky	5'10"	170	DB	Mt. Pleasant
Sam Plate	6'0"	200	LB	Greenville
Peyton Platte	6'1"	260	OL/LB	Fowler
Taylor Popp	5'10"	195	LB	Bay City Western
Jacob Pung	6'0"	190	LB	Pewamo-Westphalia
Adam Stiverson	6'0"	195	WR/OLB	Montrose
Peyton Smith	6'3"	172	QB	Ithaca
Tommy Johnstone	5'10"	160	RB/DB	Midland High
Lance Wiltsie	6'0"	170	TE/LB	MI Lutheran Seminary

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Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photos

DeWitt Football Coach Continues To Enjoy Success

John Raffel Sports Scene

DeWitt football coach Rob Zimmerman has enjoyed an incredible amount of success as the school's football coach. and athletic director Michael F. Brya found it rather easy to explain Zimmerman's success.

"Coach Zimmerman has been successful for many reasons," Brya said. "First and foremost he has a passion for the sport. He analyzes the skills and athleticism of his players and then structures the offense and defense around those skills. He models the commitment that he expects of his players and coaching staff.

"Another reason for his success has been the dedication of his loyal coaching staff; many of them have been on staff for several years, and that helps with consistency from year

to year."

Zimmerman was inducted into the Michigan High School Football Coaches Hall of Fame in 2016. His record is 332 wins, 79 losses. He previously coached at Shepherd, Spring Lake and Cedar Springs

He's been at Dewitt since 1995.

His coaching accomplishments are as follows:

13 conference championships; six undefeated regular seasons 15 Years state playoff qualifier; nine district and regional championships; two years Division 4 state runners-up, two Years Division 3 state runners-up; 10 years regional Coach of the Year and Division 3 Coach of the Year.

"I have a great job and live in a great community," he said at his Hall of Fame induction two years ago. "When I was young, my grandfather

told me if I had a great work ethic, I'd live or be successful. My parents were great role models and great fans. They've been a great inspiration my whole life.

"DeWitt is a special place. We have tremendous support for everything. Friday nights at DeWitt are special. It's a major community event during football season."

His team lost last season to Muskegon in the third round of the playoffs and finished at 10-2

"I'm super proud of these guys," Zimmerman said after the game. "It's another great year for us. I'm proud of our kids."

DeWitt lost to GR Christian in the opener and had 10 straight wins before losing to Muskegon.

"We lost our quarterback at the beginning of the summer," Zimmerman said. "These kids got better each and every week. It's the sign of a tremendous football team. We're proud of the season we had and the improvement we made. They're super kids."



DeWitt finished the season 10-2 after losing to eventual Division 2 champion Muskegon in the regional finals. (File Photo)

Trojan Scatback Hopes For More Green Space In His Senior Season

Scott Keyes Sports Scene

Halfback Tony Martin Jr. plays during a far different era in Saginaw High football than his father experienced during the 1990s. The Trojans won only two games in 2017 and Tony Jr. -- a Saginaw County champion track sprinter and long jumper -- struggled to find running room.

In contrast, Tony Martin Sr. performed during the start of an extended 1995-to-2002 run, during which Saginaw High made eight straight playoff appearances, including a Class A state title in 1999 after he graduated. Pops benefited from top-notch blocking up front, and as a result he was named among the best players in school history in a recent Saginaw News/mlive.com report.

However, The High never has returned to the playoffs since those golden years.

Tony Jr. is a 5-foot-7, 160-pound dynamo who vows that this season will be better, both for his team and for his goal of following his father's footsteps into a

college football career (Easter) "You need to run with your feet making a circular motion, more like you're riding a bicycle," he explains. "That way, after you are hit, you can go for another three yards."

Indeed, past individual Trojans have found career success in similar circumstances. Linebacker Calvin O'Neal played for a winless team during the 1970s, but went on to become a University of Michigan All-American and a top pro player.

Tony Jr. gained confidence early last season, when he broke loose for TD romps of 75 yards against Mount Pleasant and 52 yards versus Bay City Western.

The son of Kishon Gardenhire, with one brother and three sisters, says his father taught him the darting moves and the footwork that a smaller runner must employ.

"You must move your feet in a circular motion, almost like riding a bicycle," he says. "That way, you can use your power to gain another three yards after you are hit."

Tony Martin aims to study in college for a career in sports training and physical therapy.

He describes his running style as "elusive, fast and explosive. I'm stronger than I look." He adds, "Hopefully, I won't be overlooked (by college recruiters) because we haven't had a winning team."



Saginaw High's Tony Martin Jr. is expected to have a breakout season for the Trojans in 2018. (File Photo)

Veteran Group Has St. Johns Poised To Make Run At CAAC Red Title

David Cook Sports Scene

With one of the premier running backs in Mid-Michigan leading the way, the St. Johns Redwings are loaded up for a run at the CAAC Red title this season.

A 6-foot-1, 220-pound senior, Konner Near rushed for 1,377 yards last season and 21 touchdowns on his way to earning honorable-mention, all-state honors.

"Konner is a very strong running back," said St. Johns coach Dave Mariage. "He is over 200 pounds and he is hard to bring down. He's also elusive and has decent vision. Last year he was dinged up the whole season. Right now, he looks like he's running more freely and is also taking on more of a leadership role."

The Redwings also return senior quarterback Colton Powell (6-0, 170) who provides the offense with

a passing threat to complement Near's running ability.

"Colton has had a good summer," Mariage said. "He threw the ball well. He has a year's worth of experience and has a better understanding of pressures and reads."

Senior Cole Thomas (6-1, 200) returns to give Powell an excellent target to throw to.

"Cole looked really good this summer," Mariage said. "He will play a little tight end for us and is quite an asset as a receiver. He has good hands and the speed to get open and is going to be hard to matchup with."

Up front, seniors Kyler McNamara (6-2, 250) and Reece Armbrustmacher provide the line with anchors at tackle and guard respectively.

Several veterans return on the defensive side of the football. McNamara anchors the defensive

line with Near and Thomas back at linebacker. Even more experience returns in the secondary. Luke Purtill can play either corner or safety. Carson Vandeberg returns at safety while Mitch Nylander also saw playing time last year.

A pair of sophomores are poised to make an impact this year. Brock Miller will see playing time both in the offensive backfield and the secondary. Fellow sophomore CJ Krumm (5-11, 195) is a promising linebacker prospect.

"Our strength on defense is our secondary," Mariage said. "We return a couple of kids back in the secondary. We are looking to play faster on defense this season. I don't know speed-wise if we are faster, but we made a few changes that will allow us to play faster on defense."

With DeWitt moving up to the CAAC Blue, the CAAC Red title is up for grabs this season.



St. Johns running back Konner Near finished with close to 1,400 yards and 21 touchdowns leading the Redwings ground game a year ago. (File Photo)

"DeWitt won the league title the last 12 or 13 years," Mariage said. "There is a lot of competitive balance in the league and the championship is wide open.

Haslett finished second last year and has a lot of players back and Williamston is a very strong program moving up. It's going to be a real interesting season."

New Coach At BC Western

John Raffel Sports Scene

Bay City Western has a new football coach in Chris Willertz, but the Warriors are working to get the program on the right path.

The Warriors were 0-9 last season and have been 12-35 since 2013.

Willertz graduated from Bay City Handy in 1985 and went to Michigan State for a collegiate football career. He was a defensive end and played on a Spartan Rose Bowl team. Then he went to Hamilton, Mich. and worked with the University of Cincinnati where he's been the last 25 years.

He cited two reasons for coming to Bay City.

"My mom is 79," Willertz said. "This was the opportunity to come to Bay City, my hometown, and coach. I've been out of coaching football 6 or 7 years in Cincinnati because of circumstances. I've been doing some sports leadership group work down in Cincinnati. We've been working with football, basketball and wrestling coaches, and did a lot of character development and a lot of team building. I coached a Moeller High School in Cincinnati and worked with the University of Cincinnati's football team. And I did some work at

Ohio State.

"This gave me a different perspective in not just being a football coach but in also being a team builder. I felt it rounded me out into being a coach."

Willertz will also be teaching social studies at Western. He started working at the end of February.

"They had social studies teaching opening, so I was able to step in, get started in the weight room and get together a staff as early as March," he said.

There's plenty of rebuilding work to be done. Willertz said he's be in a rebuilding situation before and hopes to build up numbers. He's working to build up the culture and make football a 12-month program at Western.



Chris Willertz

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2018 HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SCENE FOOTBALL PREVIEW

OTTAWA-KENT CONFERENCE PREVIEW

ROCKFORD RAMS

League: Ottawa-Kent Conference Red
Coach: Ralph Munger
2017 Record: 8-3, 4-1 2nd
Players lost: Cody Carone (OL), Logan Lee (TE), Marcus Remtema (DB), Khale Showers (LB), Jason Whittaker (QB).
Players returning: Drew Bareno (QB), Landon Cole (OL), Jonah Erickson (OL), Jaiden Friesen (LB), Taylor Green (DE), Eli Haddad (WR/DB), Austin Klein (FB/LB), Cade Klimczak (DE), Mitch McCrone (LB), Jack Richardson (RB), Ian Rodriguez (DB), Connor White (RB).
Outlook: The Rams are reloading on offense around senior quarterback Drew Bareno (6-4, 190) who gained playing time last year. The Rams are deep at running back with seniors Jack Richardson and Connor White and fullback Austin Klein. Seniors Landon Cole



(6-4, 250) and Jonah Erickson (6-5, 295) anchor the offensive line. Junior speedster Eli Haddad returns at receiver and is also a starter at defensive back. Senior defensive end Cade Klimczak (6-2, 230) returns to anchor the defensive line with Alek Foss (6-0, 220) with juniors Jaiden Friesen (5-9, 230) and Mitch McCrone (6-2, 190) at linebacker along with Klein.

LOWELL RED ARROWS

League: Ottawa-Kent Conference White
Coach: Justin Miller
2017 Record: 6-4, 4-2 3rd
Players lost: Addison Buckius (WR), Caleb Devereaux (OL), Brady Douma (WB/DB), Connor Douma (WB/DB), David Kruse (QB).
Players returning: Chase Anderson (OL), Andy Anschutz (RB/DB), Jordan Dent (DE), Keegan Laux (OL), Grady McDonald (RB), Avry Mutschler (QB), Brennan Pawloski (QB/DB), Zack Post (OL), Grant Pratt (RB), Gabe Smith (RB/LB).
Outlook: Veteran defensive coordinator Justin Miller takes the reigns this fall for a Red Arrow team that is breaking in a large group of new starters. On offense, senior center Zack Post anchors the offensive line with Jordan Dent returning as a dangerous receiving threat at tight end. The quarterback position is wide open with senior Avry Mutschler, junior Brennan Pawloski, and sophomore Brett Spanbauer all in the mix. On defense, cornerback Andy Anschutz has been a starter since his freshman season. Dent and senior Gabe Smith are a pair of veteran linebackers. Mutschler is

For the first time in 20-plus seasons Lowell will have a new coach patrolling the sidelines this season, as longtime coach Noel Dean stepped down this summer to pursue other business opportunities. Meanwhile, Rockford coach Ralph Munger (above) continues to be a coaching staple on the west side of the state. (File Photos)

veteran defensive back.

CEDAR SPRINGS RED HAWKS

League: Ottawa-Kent Conference White
Coach: Gus Kapolka
2017 Record: 7-4, 5-1 2nd
Players lost: Paul Duran (OL), Jacob Galinas (DL), Nick Patin (LB), Dylan Tanis (OL), John Todd (RB).
Players returning: Seth Almas (TE), Brady Amell (OL), Xavier Anderson (DL), Gage Gardner (DL), Cody Gott (OL), Jarrett Hoogerhyde (OL), Wyatt Knauf (OL), Lucas Pienton (RB/DB), Ryan Ringler (RB/LB), Zach Schmid (LB), Kolby Swank (QB), Landon Totten (RB), Nate Webb (TE), Ethan West (DB).
Outlook: With senior Ryan Ringler back for a fourth year at linebacker, the Red Hawk defense is in good hands. Xavier Anderson Gage Gardner return to lead the charge up front while Lucas Pienton, Graham Bayink and Ethan West return to the secondary. Pienton, Ringler and Landon Totten return at running back with Kolby Swank stepping in at quarterback. The offensive line is built around Cody Gott and Wyatt Knauf.

BELDING BLACK KNIGHTS

League: Ottawa-Kent Conference Silver
Coach: Joe Schwander
2017 Record: 9-3, 5-1 2nd
Players lost: Trent Collins (QB), James Daniel (RB), Brandon Powers (OL/DL), David Ross (OL/DL).
Players returning: Tyler Cooper



(RB/LB), Donovan Greene (OL/DL), Riley Hart (RB/DB), Nick Heintzelman (RB/DB), JJ Jones (DT), Cole Reeves (QB/DB), Jonny Ross (OL/DL).
Outlook: The Black Knights reached the regional finals last season and with several key players returning will again be in the hunt for a playoff spot. Junior quarterback Cole Reeves (6-1, 185) pilots an offense built around running backs Nick Heintzelman, junior Riley Hart and sophomore Tyler Cooper. Jonny Ross and Donovan Greene anchor the offensive line. Greene and Ross are joined on the defensive line by senior JJ Jones. Cooper is back at linebacker with Hart, Reeves and Heintzelman returning in the secondary.

GREENVILLE YELLOWJACKETS

League: Ottawa-Kent Conference White
Coach: Eddie Ostipow
2017 Record: 4-5, 2-4 5th
Players lost: Trent Bitner (OL), Kyle Lorenz (RB), Branden Parris (OL), Bryce Priebe (RB), Casey Rigney (OL).

Players returning: Zane Bigelow (DB), Ryan Burden (DB), Gavin Cossou (TE), Aiden Dowdell (DL), Cam Heppie (QB), Nathan Kok (OL), Hunter Kroesing (OL), Matt Laudenslager (LB), Ryan Olsen (WR/DB), Sam Plate (RB/LB), Jake Rasmussen (WR), Caleb Slager (OL), Grant Thwaites (DB), Cam Tucker (LB), Cody Varney (WR), Kurtis Vinton (OL), Joey Vollink (DL).
Outlook: The Yellowjackets return plenty of talent on both sides of the football. On offense, quarterback Cam Heppie (5-11, 180) pilots an offense that features running back Sam Plate (6-0, 205) along with wide receivers Jake Rasmussen and Ryan Olsen and tight end Gavin Cossou (6-6, 215). Nathan Kok and juniors Caleb Slager (6-1, 210) and Kurtis Vinton (6-2, 215) anchor the offensive line. The defense is paced by junior linebackers Matt Laudenslager (5-11, 210) and Plate along with senior Cam Tucker (6-0, 190). Zane Bigelow, Ryan Burden and Olsen head up the secondary. Sophomores Grant Thwaites (6-2, 195) at safety and Aiden Dowdell (5-10, 205) at defensive tackle will also contribute.

CAAC WHITE PREVIEW

PORTLAND RAIDERS

League: Capital Area Activities Conference White
Coach: John Novara
2017 Record: 10-2, 5-0 1st
Players lost: Austin Allison (QB), Dean Battley (LB), Gavin Dennany (DB), Brock Gross (RB), Jacob Nowak (OL/DL).
Players returning: Dylan Arthur (DL), Jay Davids (OL), Tate Dziejwiakowski (PK), Owen Guilford (SB/DB), Jacob Hickling (DE), Hunter Hohman (DB), Hunter Klein (OL), Matt Koster (OL/DE), Trevor Lattimer (RB), Cade Parmalee (DB), Grant Werner (LB).
Outlook: The Raiders have won the last three CAAC White titles and with several key veterans back another title this season is very possible. The offensive line is a strength with the return of all-conference linemen Jay Davids and Matt Koster along with senior Hunter Klein (6-6, 280). Running back Owen Guilford will provide impact plays both as a runner and receiver. A veteran core leads what will be a solid defense. Dylan Arthur (6-1, 305) anchors the defensive front along with Koster at defensive end and all-conference defensive end Jacob Hickling (6-3, 205). Cade Parmalee and Guilford are returning all-conference defensive backs. Portland also boasts an all-conference kicker in senior Tate Dziejwiakowski.

Edwards (DB), Jacob Fishette (LB), Gabe Lenneman (DB), Michael Lynn III (QB).
Players returning: Collin Day (DB), Joshua Kramer (QB/DB), Mike McKerr (OL/DL), Ian Moore (OL), Kabbash Richards (WR/DE), Lucas Ruddock (DL), Michael Whitney (RB/LB).
Outlook: The Cougar offense returns a pair of key impact players in seniors Josh Kramer (6-0, 187) and Michael Whitney (5-11, 205). Kramer is a versatile athlete who can play running back, receiver or quarterback. Whitney also intercepted six passes as he earned honorable-mention, all-state honors as a defensive back. Whitney ran for over 600 yards last year and is also a dependable pass catcher. Senior tackle Mike McKerr (6-5, 285) anchors the offensive line and is joined by all-conference defensive end Kabbash Richards (6-4, 210) and nose guard Lucas Ruddock (6-1, 295) along the defensive front.

LANSING SEXTON BIG REDS

League: Capital Area Activities Conference White
Coach: Johnel Davis
2017 Record: 8-4, 4-3 t 3rd CAAC Blue
Players lost: Cody Blankenburg (RB/DB), Karl Brooks (WR/OLB), Luzander Granderson (OL), Byron Pearce (DL), Neal Prince (TE/OLB).
Players returning: Trey Ashley (DT), Jackson Barnes (QB), Joseph Crook (OL), Carteyae Gordon (DB), Jaylen Kyle (OL/DL).
Outlook: The Big Reds have a new look this season with Johnel Davis taking over as head coach and the team playing in the CAAC White. The Big Reds also suffered heavy graduation losses from a team that reached the regional finals last season. One familiar face is senior quarterback Jackson Barnes (6-2, 167) who earned all-conference honors last season in the

LANSING CATHOLIC CENTRAL COUGARS

League: Capital Area Activities Conference White
Coach: Jim Ahern
2017 Record: 8-3, 4-1 2nd
Players lost: Alex Bres (DB), Jack

Lansing Sexton finished the 2017 season 8-4. (Marvin Hall, High School Sports Scene Photo)

GREATER LANSING ATHLETIC CONFERENCE PREVIEW

LAKEWOOD VIKINGS

League: GLAC
Coach: Matt Markwart
2017 Record: 8-2, 4-1 2nd
Players lost: Parker Smith QB, Thomas Houghton RB
Players returning: Jacob Elenbaas, QB, Austin Leazenby OLB
Outlook: If the Vikings avoid the injury bug, they can contend for the title

LESLIE BLACKHAWKS

League: GLAC
Coach: Tom Johns
2017 Record: 3-6
Players lost: Cullen Cox RB, Haeden Heibel OL, Josh Ries OL, Parker Schiller OL, Mitchell Seavolt LB, Clay Shroufe DL, Kellen Frohriep DB
Players returning: Anthony Smeiska QB, Thomas Coltrain DB, Hayden Ade OL, Joe Cortis DL, Scott Kanik LB
Outlook: "We will be smaller than a year ago," coach Tom Johns said. "We will need to play with a great effort, and play for one another. If we play hard each week, and limit our mistakes we will be OK. Last year we wanted to

CAAC Blue. In the trenches, senior lineman Joseph Crook (5-11, 270) is a returning all-conference tackle. Senior nose guard Trey Ashley (5-8, 250) is a force along the defensive line along with junior Jaylen Kyle. Senior Carteyae Gordon is a returner at safety.

IONIA BULLDOGS

League: Capital Area Activities Conference White
Coach: Mike Holes
2017 Record: 4-5, 2-3 4th
Players lost: Jack Faulkner (LB), Jake Kerr (OL/DL), John Meyer (QB), Jimmy Paulin (RB), Matt Taylor (DE).
Players returning: Jared Christensen (OL/DL), Scottie Currin (DL), Matt Grand-Gerard (WR), Micah Groom (QB/DB), Justice Nummer (DE), Erik Pilkington (LB), Brady Swinehart (WR/DB), Gage Taylor (WR/DB), Jake Veale (WR/DB).
Outlook: The Bulldogs featured a dazzling passing game last season and returns a number of talented receivers this year. A big key, however, is replacing quarterback John Meyer who passed for over 2,000 yards and 21 touchdowns. Matt Grand-Gerard, Brady Swinehart, Gage Taylor and Jake Veale are all outstanding pass catchers and dangerous with the football in their hands. Up front, senior Jared Christensen (6-3, 280) is a dominating lineman. Linebacker Erik Pilkington and defensive lineman Scottie Currin pace the defense along with Veale, Swinehart and Veale in the secondary and senior defensive end Justice Nummer (6-2, 190).

EATON RAPIDS GREYHOUNDS

League: Capital Area Activities Conference White
Coach: Joseph Brya
2017 Record: 2-7, 0-5 6th
Players lost: Michael Herig (FB/LB),

Garrett Morris (QB/DB), Dallas Price (DL), Patrick Roberts (OL), Nick Webb (TE).
Players returning: Coltin Anderson (DB), Gabe Best (OL), Thomas Charles (WR), Zach Dassance (WR/DB), Nathan Dassance (WR), Marshall Meeder (PK), Chase Metts (DB), Parker Thomas (OL).
Outlook: The Greyhounds return one of the top young players in the conference in sophomore wide receiver Zach Dassance (6-2, 175) who earned all-conference honors as a freshman last year. Senior defensive back Coltin Anderson also earned honorable-mention, all-conference honors last season. Junior Marshall Meeder is a standout kicker. Seniors Gabe Best (6-1, 285) and Parker Thomas (6-2, 210) return to the offensive line.

CHARLOTTE ORIOLES

League: Capital Area Activities Conference White
Coach: Jeff Finney
2017 Record: 4-5, 2-3 4th CAAC Red



compete every week, and we need to build on that."

OLIVET EAGLES

League: GLAC
Coach: Gabe Priddy
2017 Record: 8-2, 5-0 1st
Players lost: James Stone FS, Tyler Campbell, WR
Players returning: Dylan Redfield WR, Heath Flower RB.
Outlook: Olivet returns plenty of talent in its bid to win another league title.

PERRY RAMBLERS

League: GLAC

Coach: Jeff Bott
2017 Record: 4-5, 1-4 5th
Players lost: Zack Dixon QB, Jackson Courtier DE
Players returning: CJ King RB, Barret Hallock WR.
Outlook: The Ramblers hope to have enough material to contend for the playoffs

STOCKBRIDGE PANTHERS

League: GLAC
Coach: Jeremy Killinger
2017 Record: 1-8, 1-4 5th
Players lost: Chris Jenkins WR, Jake Sutton, DB

Players returning: Hunter Thayer TE, Gage Place WE
Outlook: Stockbridge will seek improvement to have a better season,

VERMONTVILLE MAPLE VALLEY

League: GLAC
Coach: Marty Martin
2017 Record: 6-5, 2-3 4th
Players lost: Justin Moore TE, Cayden Courter RB
Players returning: Nick Martin OC, Aaron Gorman DT
Outlook: Maple Valley made the playoffs last season and appears to have the talent to do it again.

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CAAC RED PREVIEW

HASLETT VIKINGS

League: Capital Area Activities Conference Red
Coach: Charlie Otlewski
2017 Record: 8-3, 4-1 2nd
Players lost: Hayden Garrett (LB), Dan Keener (OL/DL), Nate Magnuson (RB), Nathan Otlewski (OL/MLB).
Players returning: Ben Brittain (RB/DB), Michael Cronin (OL), Logan Cross (WR/DB), Drew Dabler (DE), Quintin Hernandez (WR/LB), Noah Kildea (OL/DT), Mitchell Mowid (QB), Kyle Pinkelman (OL), Matt Plaga (DE), Damen Redmond (LB), Jaden Thelen (WR/DB), Hyrum Tibbitts (WR), Garrett Young (DL).
Outlook: After placing second in the league last year, the Vikings are determined to capture the title this season. Haslett returns plenty of talent on offense with seniors Mitchell Mowid and Hyrum Tibbitts providing quality play at quarterback and Quintin

Hernandez, Jaden Thelen and Tibbitts providing excellent receiving skills. Senior running back Ben Brittain is a standout in the ground game. The defense is led by returning all-conference defensive ends Drew Dabler and Matt Plaga. The Vikings are solid in the trenches with seniors Michael Cronin (6-1, 225) and Garrett Young (6-2, 255) along with junior Kyle Pinkelman (6-1, 240).

LANSING EASTERN QUAKERS

League: Capital Area Activities Conference Red
Coach: Jordan Morgan
2017 Record: 0-9, 0-7 8TH CAAC Blue
Players lost: Justus Kukuk (WR), Kyle Lewis (OL).
Players returning: Ta'Vonne Conner-Aikens (TE/DE), Phillip McIntosh (DE), Damon Milton (OL), Trent O'Bryant (QB), Caleb Patterson (WR), Kyangelo Robinson (RB), Devin Toles (DB).
Outlook: The Quakers have a new coach in Jordan Morgan and are in a new league as they enter

the CAAC Red. Eastern is led by a trio of seniors who earned honorable-mention, all-conference honors in the CAAC Blue last year. Kyangelo Robinson returns at running back with Damon Milton anchoring the offensive line. Senior cornerback Devin Toles is a leader of the defense. Juniors looking to make an impact include tight end/defensive end Ta'Vonne Conner-Aikens (6-2, 210), defensive end Phillip McIntosh (6-1, 225), wide receiver Caleb Patterson, running back Ricky Bell Jr., and quarterback Trent O'Bryant.

ST. JOHNS REDWINGS

League: Capital Area Activities Conference Red
Coach: Dave Mariage
2017 Record: 5-4, 3-2 3rd
Players lost: Tristen Burns (OL), Jacob Dorn (TE/DE), Cole Paseka (OL/DL), Tyler Secord (OL/DL), Peyton Workman (FB/LB).
Players returning: Reece Armbrustmacher (OL/LB), Kyle McNamara (OL), Konner Near (RB/LB), Colton Powell (QB/P), Cole Thomas (TE).
Outlook: The Redwings return one of the premier running backs in Mid-Michigan in senior Konner Near (6-1, 205). Near rushed for 1,377 yards and scored 21 touchdowns last season. Near is also a standout linebacker and is an anchor of the Redwing defense. A pair of returning all-conference return to anchor the offensive line. Tyler Secord (6-2, 250) paves the way at tackle with Reece Armbrustmacher (5-8, 205) back at pulling guard. Senior Colton Powell (6-0, 170) returns to give the offense a dual-threat at quarterback with senior Cole Thomas (6-1, 200) returning at tight end. Near and Armbrustmacher anchor the defense from their linebacking spots.

WILLIAMSTON HORNETS

League: Capital Area Activities Conference Red
Coach: Stever Kerston

2017 Record: 7-5, 3-2 3rd CAAC White
Players lost: Mason Bamfield (LB), Drew Bowen (SB), Michael Hurlbert (OL), Jackson Pollak (QB), Frankie Toomey (SB).
Players returning: Connor Finn (FB), Austin Stiffler (QB/P), Case Conley (WR), Nathan Elenbaas (DE), Evan Field (RB), Carey Haney (WR), Maverick Pardee (OL/LB), IJ Strien (OL).
Outlook: The Hornets reached the regional finals behind a high-powered offense. Productive quarterback Jackson Pollak must be replaced with senior Austin Stiffler looking to step up. The Hornets return a pair of big-time receivers in speedster Carey Haney (6-0, 180) and Case Conley (6-6, 185) who brings good athleticism and hands. Senior running back Evan Field (5-9, 205) provides plenty of punch in the ground game. Senior IJ Strien leads the way for the offensive line. On defense, senior end Nathan Elenbaas (6-3, 230) is a big-time impact player who totaled 21 tackles for loss and 12 sacks last fall.

FOWLerville GLADIATORS

League: Capital Area Activities Conference Red
Coach: Jonathon Fletcher
2017 Record: 2-7, 1-4 5th CAAC White
Players lost: Mitchell Bishop (DL), Trevor Brock (LB), Alex Brownlee (RB), Hunter Garback (WR), Trevor Miller (OL).
Players returning: Geoffrey Knaggs (QB), JT Maybee (WR), Andrew McFadden (WR), Tom Salois (RB), Graden Waters (OT/DL).
Outlook: The Gladiators bring a productive passing game into the CAAC Red this season. Senior quarterback Geoffrey Knaggs (6-3, 195) is a dangerous dual-threat quarterback. Senior wide receivers JT Maybee and Andrew McFadden were the top two receivers last year. Senior Tom Salois returns at running back with senior offensive tackle Graden Waters (6-6, 231)



leading the way up front. Middle linebacker Alec Johnson heads up the defense along with senior defensive lineman Kyle Horgan. Maybee and Salois return to the secondary.

MASON BULLDOGS

League: Capital Area Activities Conference Red
Coach: Gary Houghton
2017 Record: 2-7, 1-4 5th
Players lost: Forrest Akers (OL), Desmond Davis (DB), Mitch Lovell (DB), Ben Surato (DL), Austin Willard (LB).
Players returning: Noah Anderson (OL/DL), Chandler Cheeks (WR/DB), Sam Connolly (FB/LB), Jack Gilchrist (DT), Zach Haynes (WR), Jake Lock (WR), Mason Stewart (FB/LB), Syllas Woll (QB).
Outlook: The Bulldogs are led by a pair of talented linemen in senior Noah Anderson (6-3, 220) and junior defensive tackle Jack Gilchrist (6-2, 245). Senior quarterback Syllas Woll has plenty of varsity experience and some talented targets to throw to in seniors Chandler Cheeks (6-3, 190) and Zach Haynes and junior Jake Lock. Senior Sam Connolly (5-8, 175) and sophomore Mason Stewart (6-0, 193) lead the ground game. Gilchrist earned all-conference honors at defensive tackle last season as did Cheeks at defensive back.

CAAC BLUE PREVIEW

DEWITT PANTHERS

League: Capital Area Activities Conference Blue
Coach: Rob Zimmerman
2017 Record: 10-2, 5-0 1st CAAC Red
Players lost: Jack Horan (PK), Noah Koenigsnecht (WR), Alan Smith (WR), Stephen Walker (LB), Darron Weber (RB).
Players returning: Caleb Aungst (DE), Blake Gatfield (QB), Mason Gilbert (OL), Derek Hamp (WR/DB), Michael Joseph (OL), David Locher (RB), Adam Stone (OL), Tyler Warren (DB).
Outlook: The Panthers enter a new era this season as they move up to the CAAC Blue where they will face teams like Grand Ledge, Holt, East Lansing and Okemos on an annual basis. The Panthers enter the new league with a potent offense. Quarterback Blake Gatfield stepped up and turned in a big season last fall. Junior running back David Locher provides an impact player at running back. Returning all-conference offensive linemen Michael Joseph (5-10, 260) and Adam Stone (5-11, 235) anchor the blocking. On defense, Caleb Aungst (6-0, 205) is a returning all-conference defensive end. Senior Derek Hamp is a returning all-conference player in the secondary and is also a solid receiver on offense.

GRAND LEDGE COMETS

League: Capital Area Activities Conference Blue
Coach: Matt Bird
2017 Record: 8-2, 7-0 1st CAAC Blue
Players lost: Nolan Bird (QB), Cal Johnston (DB), Cal Riggs (LB), Alec Rogers (DL), Zach Willoughby (WR).
Players returning: Landen Ashley (OL), Logan Ashley (OL), Mitchell Crouch (LB), Logan Hylek (QB), Ja'Qarius Threadgill (DB).
Outlook: The Comets were hit hard by graduation. Offensively, the Comets are rebuilding the passing game. Junior quarterback Logan Hylek (5-11, 160) is looking to step in for the graduated Nolan Bird. Junior running back

Kavion Autrey is in the mix at running back. Up front, senior Logan Ashley (6-2, 225) and junior Landen Ashley (6-1, 230) return after earning honorable-mention, all-conference honors last season. On defense, senior Ja'Qarius Threadgill is a returning all-conference player. Threadgill provides impact play on defense from numerous spots on the field. Linebacker Mitchell Crouch (5-10, 195) brings good range and tackling skills and heads up the linebacking crew.

EAST LANSING TROJANS

League: Capital Area Activities Conference Blue
Coach: Bill Feraco
2017 Record: 9-3, 6-1 2nd
Players lost: Roy Bellamy-Crawford (DB), Triston Klusack (OL/DL), Mykel Thornton (DL), Blake Underwood (DB-Miami University).
Players returning: Kyle Bristow (WR/DB), Sam Busch (QB), Kaleb Elam (DB), Kobe Hayward (RB), Darian Holbrook (RB), Noah Iosefa (OLB), Jamar Mills (LB), Jack Morse (PK).
Outlook: The Trojans have been on a roll the past few seasons including reaching the regional finals last season. In senior running backs Kobe Hayward and Darian Holbrook, the Trojans have a dynamic pair of runners. At quarterback, junior Sam Busch (6-4, 210) is an upcoming talent. Junior wide receiver Kyle Bristow (6-2, 180) is a returning all-conference player who also starts at safety. Junior middle linebacker Jamar Mills (5-11, 225) anchors the defense. Noah Iosefa (6-1, 175) returns at outside linebacker. Senior corner back Kaleb Elam (6-0, 180) is a returning all-conference player. If the Trojans develop strong line play they are in line for another outstanding season.

HOLT RAMS

League: Capital Area Activities Conference Blue
Coach: Chad Fulk
2017 Record: 3-6, 3-4 15th
Players lost: Roscoe George (OL), Mitch Johnson (OL), Troy Jordan (RB), Ashton McGuiere (OL), Xavier Thurston (LB).
Players returning: Charles Allen

(WR/DE/OLB), Dylan Bouck (WR), Peyton Bruce (OLB), Sean Curry (LB), Eli Haidamous (OL), Joseph Martinez (RB/WR), Connor McNamara (DE), David Michael Peterson (QB), Eli Smith (FB), Logan VanEnkevort (RB).
Outlook: The Rams will be one of the most exciting young teams in the area this season. Senior quarterback David Michael Peterson (6-2, 180) is one of the top quarterbacks in Mid-Michigan and has talented targets to throw to in junior standout Charles Allen (6-2, 190) and senior Dylan Bouck. Junior speedster JoJo Martinez (5-10, 165) is also a home run threat at receiver and also running back. Junior running back Logan VanEnkevort (5-9, 165) is an athletic back that earned all-conference honors last year. Up front, junior lineman Eli Haidamous (6-3, 270) is a punishing blocker while senior Mason Gill has experience at center and tackle. Senior linebacker Sean Curry (6-2, 215) leads the defense along with Allen at outside linebacker and senior Connor McNamara (6-0, 197) at defensive end. Junior Peyton Bruce (6-0, 220) is an impact player at outside linebacker.

OKEMOS CHIEFTAINS

League: Capital Area Activities Conference Blue
Coach: Mike Krumm
2017 Record: 5-4, 3-4 1 5th
Players lost: Charles Arrington (DL), Brandon Clark (DB), Dominique Clerley (RB), Drew McGaughey (LB), Patrick Nugent (TE/LB).
Players returning: Chase Conrad (RB/LB), Chris Hutsell (OL), Broderick Jordan (OL/DL), Mason Kaczmarek (QB), Carson Krumm (RB/LB), Jacob Richardson (TE), Derek Sims (RB/DB).
Outlook: The Chieftains have a new coach this season with Okemos grad Mike Krumm taking over the reins. Okemos is strong in the trenches with the return of senior standout Broderick Jordan (6-3, 285) who is getting a number of D1 looks and Chris Hutsell (6-6, 285) who will also play football somewhere on Saturday's. Senior Mason Kaczmarek is a solid all-around athlete looking to step in at quarterback. Senior Carson Krumm (5-9, 175) returns in the backfield and is a defensive leader at linebacker. Seniors Chase



Grand Ledge returns a solid group of players that finished 8-2 a year ago. (Marvin Hall, High School Sports Scene Photo)

Conrad and Derek Sims (5-11, 195) also return to see action at running back and on defense. Senior tight end Jacob Richardson (6-3, 195) is an athletic receiver that will make an impact.

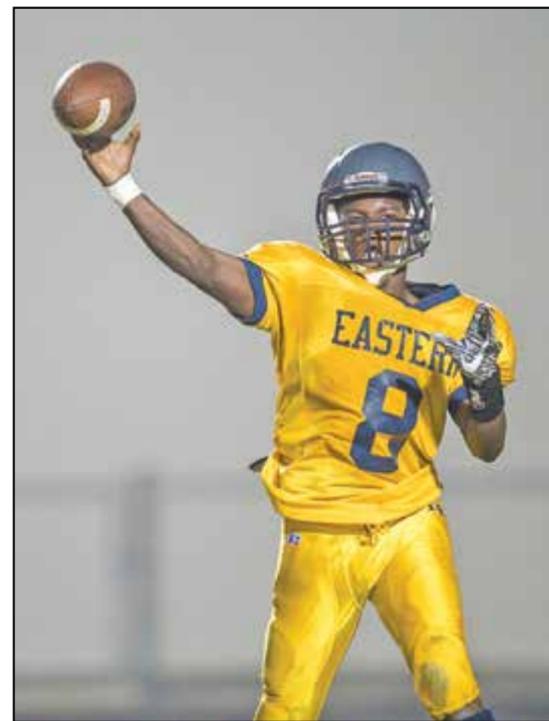
LANSING WAVERLY WARRIORS

League: Capital Area Activities Conference Blue
Coach: Ronald Pizzo
2017 Record: 2-7, 0-5 6th CAAC Red
Players lost: Kenny Brewer (WR), Luke Craig (LB), Darius Smith (WR/DB), Phillip Stanton (OL/DL).
Players returning: Mark Craig (OL), Mason Darden (DL), Keshaun Harris (RB/WR/CB), DeVion Mollitor (DL), Dytrel Moore (QB), David Smith (DL), DeAndre Terry (DL).
Outlook: The Warriors return several impact players and have a new head coach in Ronald Pizzo as they move up into the CAAC Blue. Senior speedster Keshaun Harris (5-11, 170) is a two-time, all-conference selection and an impact player on both sides of the ball. Dytrel Moore brings experience at quarterback. Several juniors are looking to contribute on offense including lineman Mark Craig (5-11, 220) and backs/receivers RJ Martinez and Diallo Walker and sophomore back Carre' on Gordon. Senior all-conference player David Smith (5-11, 215) returns to anchor the defense along with senior lineman Mason Darden (6-0, 197). DeAndre Terry (6-1, 254) and junior DeVion Mollitor (6-3, 255) add more size up front.

providing excellent coverage skills.

LANSING EVERETT VIKINGS

League: Capital Area Activities Conference Blue
Coach: Mike Smith
2017 Record: 1-8, 1-6 7th
Players lost: Marcus Gilkie (OL), Timas Koko (WR), Cage Parker (LB), Antwon Peak (DL), Devon Salaam (DB).
Players returning: Justin Cuffer (TE/LB), Dominique Davidson (DE), Patrick Ellis (WR), Shamar Howard (WR/DB), Dayton Jones (QB), Keewone Parker (MLB), Noah Smith (WR/DB).
Outlook: The Vikings have the ingredients for a potent passing attack with the return of junior quarterback Dayton Jones (6-2, 165). Senior wideout Noah Smith (6-0, 185) and sophomore Patrick Ellis provide game-breaking potential in the passing game while junior Shamar Howard is a versatile impact player at receiver or running back. On defense, senior defensive end Dominique Davidson (6-6, 220) is a dominating pass rusher and is a force against the run. Senior middle linebacker Keewone Parker (6-1, 205) will pile up the tackles with help from senior linebacker Justin Cuffer. The secondary is solid with Smith and Howard



Left: Lansing Eastern is searching for its first win in three seasons while Williamston (Right) will look to improve on its 7-5 record from a year ago. (File Photos)

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TRI-VALLEY CONFERENCE EAST PREVIEW

BIRCH RUN PANTHERS

League: TVC East
Coach: Tom Gruno
2017 Record: 3-6, 3-3
Players lost: Joe Pagel RB, Derek Michaels CB
Players returning: Brock Cook TE, Chase Gibson OLB
Outlook: The Panthers expect to have enough talent to make a playoff run this season

BRIDGEPORT BEARCATS

League: TVC East
Coach: Kevin Marshall
2017 Record: 6-4, 4-2

Players lost: Jalen Jones HB, Demus Stewart DB, Charles Garrett QB
Players returning: Larry Polk OLB, Frankie Gonzalez QB, Markelle Garrett QB, Siquarius Ball WR
Outlook: Last season, the Bears posted their first winning record since 1999 and made the playoffs for the second time.

CARROLLTON CAVALIERS

League: TVC East
Coach: Nathan Wotta
2017 Record: 7-4, 5-1
Players lost: Nic Cade CB, Jaylan Thomas RB, Jaleil Warren QB/DB, Jerry Delgado LB, Jalen Myles RB
Players returning: Garrison Hand QB, Jacob Cotton MLB
Outlook: Carrollton looks to improve on last year's success and

maybe a possible run at a league title.

ESSEXVILLE-GARBER

League: TVC East
Coach: Jake Coquillard
2017 Record: 4-5 2-4 4th
Players lost: Ben VanSumeren TE/WR, Jakob Manyen OC, Mike Dalzell OT/DE, Brett Peterson SL/CB.
Players returning: Hunter Bridenbaugh QB, Jacob Denham WR/CB, Manny Joppich SL, OLB, Kyle Jaskulka RB/CB, Zach Basket DE/OG, Josh Reinke LB, Ty Coquillard, OL.
Outlook: "We have the potential to make a run at the conference title," coach Jake Coquillard said. "The key to our success will be improving our defense from the last couple years. That will be our focus. Our offense has spoke for

FRANKENMUTH EAGLES

League: TVC East
Coach: Phil Martin
2017 Record: 12-1, 6-0 1st
Players lost: Zach Jacobs QB, Ryan Kahn, RB
Players returning: Nate Stone MLB, Tyler Somerville CB
Outlook: The Eagles were league champions 12-0 before losing to eventual state champion Grand Rapids West Catholic in the Division 5 semifinals.

MILLINGTON CARDINALS

League: TVC East
Coach: Lenny Dantinne
2017 Record: 10-2, 5-1 2nd

Players lost: Ashton Brewer WR, Bryce Bearss LB, Briar Bearss QB
Players returning: Jonah Williams K, Brady Henderson DE
Outlook: Millington figures on giving Frankenmuth a run for the conference title, but watch for Bridgeport lurking over their shoulders.



Essexville-Garber's Ben VanSumeren took his talents to the University of Michigan after being named the Division 5-6 Player of the Year a year ago. (File Photo)

TRI-VALLEY CONFERENCE CENTRAL PREVIEW

ALMA PANTHERS

League: TVC Central
Coach: Dan Falor
2017 Record: 8-3, 5-2 2nd
Players Lost: Jacob Carl WR, Greg Simmons OL/DL
Players Returning: Drew Humm QB, Logan Mitchell OT/DT, Brec Alward, RB, John Bader OL/DL
Outlook: The Panthers have made the playoffs for three straight years and seem to have all the tools to make a long postseason run and a bid for a league title.

FREELAND FALCONS

League: TVC Central
Coach: Kevin Townsend
2017 Record: 6-4, 5-2 2nd
Players Lost: Garhet Metiva FB/LB, Andrew Thumma OL/DL, Coburn Lynch DL, Tobias Neidzweicki OL/DL, Donnie Graham DL, Tanner Hare DB/RB, Tyler Shea RB/DB, Justin Thompson DL, Josh Schmidt OL, Tyler Fisher DL, Nate Guentert TE Ben Fleming OC, Garrett Caudill LB
Players Returning: Jack Townsend TE/LB, Layne Moergeli FB/LB, Jayce Bourcier TE/DB/P, Josiah Murphy RB/DB, John Guerra

DL, Carston Yaw DB Aaron Comstock OC, Joe Melzo OL/LB, Elijah Vlassis QB, Aiden West RB/LB, Jack Dreyer RB/DB.
Outlook: "We are a young team with a tough schedule," coach Kevin Townsend said. "We need to have big games from our junior class. We have kids that can be big play makers and that can score every time they touch the ball. We graduated our entire defensive line."

BULLOCK CREEK LANCERS

League: TVC Central
Coach: Will Luzar
2017 Record: 2-7, 1-6 7th
Players Lost: N/A
Players Returning: N/A
Outlook: The Lancers are bidding for a winning record.

SWAN VALLEY VIKINGS

League: TVC Central
Coach: Kevin Gavenda
2017 Record: 12-2, 7-0
Players Lost: Brady Kessler OG, Jared Belknap CB, Emmett Boehler RB, Payton Pietz WR/DB, Cameron Toth DE
Players Returning: Alex Fries QB, Terryon Liddell DB, Chase Mendoza RD/DB, Rory Garner OL/DL, Brock Leinberger WR/RB.
Outlook: The Vikings, defending league champs, lost their season opener and the state title game last season, but inbetween,

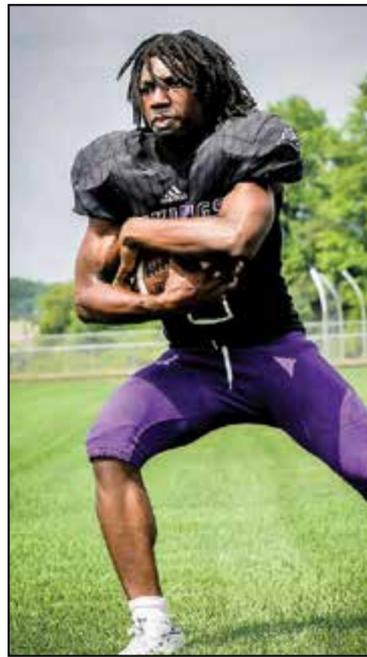
they nabbed a 12-game winning streak. They have the tools for another great season.

STANDISH STERLING PANTHERS

League: TVC Central
Coach: Marty Malcolm
2017 Record: 4-5, 2-5 6th
Players Lost: Nolan Raymond QB, Tylor Gibson RB
Players Returning: Christian Frost NG, Dalton Neitzel P
Outlook: The Panthers have the talent to make a run at the playoffs this season.

SHEPHERD BLUEJAYS

League: TVC Central
Coach: Ben Brock
2017 Record: 2-7, 0-7 8th
Players Lost: Johnny Lynch, QB/WR,
Players Returning: Logan Buckner WR/ QB/DB, Mason Iserhoth SR, LB/RB.
Outlook: "This is our final season in the TVC Central," coach Ben Brock said. "We will be joining the Jack Pine Conference for the 2019 season. We will look to rebuild this program to bring it back to where we had winning seasons in the 1980s and 1990s. Our keys to success will be buying into the new system and sticking together as a team through the adversity of what will be one of the most challenging schedules in school history."



Swan Valley returns a majority of its team that made it all the way to the Divison 5 championship game a season ago. (Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photo)

TRI-VALLEY CONFERENCE WEST PREVIEW

MICHIGAN LUTHERAN SEMINARY

League: TVC West
Coach: Karl Schmugge
2017 Record: 4-5, 4-3 3rd
Players lost: Cade Kestner QB, Adam Arrowsmith TE, Noah Nordlie LB, Jacob Lewis LB, Nathan Spaude OT, Damon Pearce DT.
Players returning: Cole Broekhuizen OL, Mason Borlaug OL, Hayden Heyn RB, Jack Vogel WR/DB, Brody Eastin DE.
Outlook: "We have the potential for a very good season," coach Karl Schmugge said. "The upcoming juniors are a good group of athletes. Max Nordlie will be our QB, and he will be a multi-

dimensional threat. The key will be how quickly the juniors, who dominate the roster, can adjust to play on the varsity level and execute."

ITHACA YELLOWJACKETS

League: TVC West
Coach: Terry Hessbrook
2017 Record: 13-1, 7-0 1st
Players lost: Joey Bentley QB/DB, Zach Hessbrook LB/RB, Ethan McCormick LB/OL, Seth Davis REC/OLB, Trey Chapin REC/OLB, Adam Culp REC/DB/K, Nik Jones OL/DL, Colton Campbell DB/WR, Seth Hessbrook OL.
Players returning: Rexton Nowakowski OL/LB, Dante Williams DL/OL, Hunter Beck DB/REC, Derek Pendell DB/REC/K, Ethan Schall OL/DL Brayden Shaw RB, Brady Hessbrook QB/DB/REC.
Outlook: "We will have a very small roster (22) players," Coach



Terry Hessbrook said. "We must have some luck on our side to stay healthy. If we do we will be very competitive. Roster has lots of talent but most are inexperienced in games." Last season, Ithaca won the TVC West Division championship for its ninth consecutive season, MHSAA District Champions for nine consecutive years, and made the MHSAA Final Four for the eighth time in nine years. On top of all of that the Yellowjackets have been MHSAA state finalists seven of the last eight years winning state titles in six of those years.

SAGINAW NOUVEL

League: TVC West
Coach: Michael Boyd
2017 Record: 13-1
Players lost: Peter Snyder WR, Tommy Sapak DE, Tate Hausbeck QB, Kenny Kujawa WR.
Players returning: Jonah Wright TE, Harry Dwan QB
Outlook: Saginaw Nouvel was a state runner-up in Division 8 last year but now moves into Division 6-rich conference and will face the likes of Ithaca in its bid to be a league champ.

PINCONNING SPARTANS

League: TVC West
Coach: David LeVasseur
2017 Record: 2-7, 2-5 6th
Players lost: Zack Backus WR/DS, Tyler Albright WR/DS, Ross Gromoski HB/LB
Players returning: Darren LaBean WR/DB, Mason Vieau QB/LB, Matt Perrou HB/DE, Anthony Reszke OC/DL, Michael Ellsworth OT/DT, Hunter McGillen WR, Kody Van Horn LB/OL.
Outlook: "We have a fantastic core group of kids that do a great job of leading the culture," coach David LeVasseur said. "I feel as though we have a great opportunity to build the character of all these young men based on the attitude of

Ithaca will have to find a replacement for quarterback Joey Bentley who is now playing his college football at Hillsdale. (File Photo)



Michigan Lutheran Seminary is expected to be solid on both sides of the ball this season led by Lance Wiltsie (left) and Hayden Heyn (right). (Scott Keyes, High School Sports Scene Photo)

those in our program. Our kids are coachable and positive, and with that we can take advantage of 2018 to build some integrity. Our W/L is important, but more importantly is who walks out of our doors as young men. Our record goes the way of our character, and I'm very pleased with our kids this season."

HEMLOCK HUSKIES

League: TVC West
Coach: Adam Clark
2017 Record: 6-4, 4-3 4th
Players lost: Jordyn Sylvester CB, Kade Peters QB
Players returning: Josh Kenny HB, Brady Devereaux QB/CB, Jake Eskilsen OL/DL
Outlook: The Huskies hope to stay injury free and make another playoff run.

SAGINAW VALLEY LUTHERAN CHARGERS

League: TVC West
Coach: Joe Wiley
2017 Record: 1-8
Players lost: Matt Bickel DB
Players returning: Brett Daenzer RB/LB, Robert Eggers OL/DL, Jacob Forney WR/BB, Warren Jacobs, OL/DL, Matt Johnson OL/DL
Outlook: The Chargers will head

into this season with Wiley as their head football coach. He was the head coach at Heritage the previous three, head at Bay City All Saints 2 years before that, and assistant at Bay City Western 8 years before that.

ST. CHARLES BULLDOGS

League: TVC West
Coach: Rick Weisbarth
2017 Record: 1-8, 1-6 7th
Players lost: Austin Kelly RB, Blake Trevillian OG, Blake Berent QB

Players returning: Alex McConnell DT, Cody Kostick OLB
Outlook: The Bulldogs feel they have the talent to contend for a winning record this season.

ST. LOUIS SHARKS

League: TVC West
Coach: Aaron Munderloh
2017 Record: 6-5, 4-3 4th
Players lost: Ernie Diaz MLB, Craig Lancaster DT
Players returning: Daniel Oswald OT/DT, Cam Mizer QB
Outlook: The Sharks look to have enough talent to be a playoff contender again.

Advertisement for MHSAA (Michigan High School Athletic Association) with text: 'Become a School Coach or Game Official', 'Contact your local high school athletic administrator or the Michigan High School Athletic Association', and contact information for 1661 Ramblewood Dr. East Lansing, MI 48823, phone 517-332-5046, website www.mhsaa.com.

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CMAC PREVIEW

PEWAMO-WESTPHALIA PIRATES

League: Central Michigan Athletic Conference
Coach: Jeremy Miller
2017 Record: 13-1, 7-0 1st
Players lost: Jimmy Lehman (QB), Dahon Schneider (DE); Jake Spitzley (WR), Alec Thelen (RB/DB), Bryce Thelen (RB).
Players returning: Ethan Arens (OL/LB), Turner Pline (OL/DE), Anthony Pohl (WR/DE), Jacob Pung (MLB), Lance Rademacher (OL/DL), Jake Spitzley (WR/DB), Noah Spitzley (OL/LB), Brendan Thelen (WR/CB), Carter Thelen (LB), Evan Thelen (RB/DB), Hunter Wirth (RB), Cameron Wirth (RB/LB).
Outlook: The Pirates made it two in a row as they overcame an opening-week loss to Monroe Catholic Central and reeled off 13-straight wins to claim the Division 7 state championship. While the Pirates graduated several key players, the cupboard is far from bare. Seniors running backs

SARANAC REDSKINS

League: Central Michigan Athletic Conference
Coach: Andrew Lytle
2017 Record: 6-4, 4-3 4th
Players lost: Tyler Bowen (DB).
Players returning: Garrett Bowen (WR/DB), Trey Edwards (TE/DE), Bryce Harder (OL/LB), Taven Haskins (RB/DE), Brady Jackson (QB/LB), Chase Potter (RB/LB), Garrett Veenstra (OL/DL), Drew Ward (LB).

Outlook: Saranac returns a host of players from a squad that reached the playoffs for the first time in six years last fall. Senior quarterback Brady Jackson (6-2, 190) is an outstanding dual-threat quarterback that directs an offense that includes talented senior running backs Taven Haskins (6-3, 197) and Chase Potter (6-0, 190). Senior tight end Trey Edwards and receiver Garrett Bowen provide excellent targets in the passing game. The Saranac defense is solid with linebackers Bryce Harder and Drew Ward returning along with Bowen, Edwards, Haskins, Jackson and Potter.

LAINGSBURG WOLFPACK

League: Central Michigan Athletic Conference
Coach: Brian Borgman
2017 Record: 8-3, 6-1 2nd
Players lost: Cole Armbruster (DE), Jakob Cecil (OL), Johnny Fortino (OL/LB), Nate Mentus (WR/DB), Nick Putnam (QB).
Players returning: Logan Brock (OL), AJ Eggleston (RB), Logan Hagerty (OL), Cole Harter (LB), Holden Patterson (LB), Cristian Pino (OL), Austin Randall (DL), Vince Salquist (QB), CJ Starr (RB).
Outlook: The Wolfpack reached the district finals last season and while several key players have graduated from that squad the team returns a solid nucleus. Junior quarterback Vince Salquist stepped in at the end of the season when injuries hit and provided steady play as a passer and a runner. Senior running back CJ Starr (5-10, 180) returns to lead a running game that also includes senior Cole Harter and junior AJ Eggleston. Up front, seniors Logan Brock and Christian Pino and juniors Logan Hagerty and Austin Randall will contribute along the offensive and defensive lines. Seniors Holden Patterson and Harter give the team a pair of athletic linebackers.

FULTON-MIDDLETON PIRATES

League: Central Michigan Athletic Conference
Coach: Paul Hungerford

2017 Record: 7-3, 5-2 3rd
Players lost: Jon Baker (RB), Evan Barton (WR), Matt Craft (LB), TJ Johnston (RB), Quincee Mahler (OL/DL).
Players returning: Zach Andrews (QB), Adam Duflo (DB).
Outlook: The Pirates qualified for the playoffs last fall but many of the key players from that squad have graduated. Fulton does return senior quarterback Zach Andrews (6-1, 180) who brings back excellent passing skills. On the defensive side of the ball senior defensive back Adam Duflo is an experienced veteran to build around.

DANSVILLE AGGIES

League: Central Michigan Athletic Conference
Coach: Jeff Graf
2017 Record: 3-6, 3-4 5th
Players lost: Carter Frantz (WR), /DL), Cole Minnis (OL), Noah Simon (FB).
Players returning: John Dell (MLB), Riley Hawkins (RB), Kurt Gay (WR), Preston Graf (OL/DL), Logan Ruckel (OL/DL), Thomas Taylor (OL), Hayden Voss (RB/DB).
Outlook: The Aggies return a solid group of linemen led by Preston Graf (6-4, 273), Logan Ruckel and Thomas Taylor. On the defensive side of the ball, senior middle linebacker John Dell (6-2, 230) is one of the top defenders in the conference.

FWLER EAGLES

League: Central Michigan Athletic Conference
Coach: Kris Ernst
2017 Record: 4-5, 2-5 6th
Players lost: Tony Hufnagel (WR/DB), Tyler Rademacher (OL/DL), Brand Thelen (RB/CB).
Players returning: Nathan Epkey (OL), Joe Feldpausch (OL), Gavin Fitzpatrick (OL/DL), Cole George (OL/DE), Nate Myers (RB/LB), Tony Piggott (OL/DL), Tyler Piggott (RB/LB), Peyton Platte (OL/DL), Carter Pline (WR/DB), Caiden Pung (QB/WR/DB), Jacob Taylor (OL/DL).
Outlook: With a large group of veterans returning, the Eagles look to rebound this season. Senior

Jacob Taylor (5-11, 240) and junior Peyton Platte (6-1, 260) lead along both sides of the line. Junior Carter Pline (6-5, 190) is an excellent all-around athlete that will see time at receiver and defensive back. The backfield has a number of potential contributors in seniors Tyler Piggott and Nate Myers and junior Caiden Pung.

BATH FIGHTING BEES

League: Central Michigan Athletic Conference
Coach: Matthew Stephens
2017 Record: 2-7, 1-6 7th
Players lost: Sam Agler (OL), Chaz Hatt (RB), Zach Parry (LB), Jaylen Richardson (RB).
Players returning: Logan Costello (OL/DL), Addison Crowell (WR/DB), Joseph Hovey (OL), Robert Mocnjaj (QB), Gavin Parry (SB/CB), Austin Rhyndress (OT/DE), Bryan Secord (OL/DL).
Outlook: The Bees return a solid core of veterans led by senior Austin Rhyndress (6-0, 230). Rhyndress is an anchor on the offensive line at tackle and an impact player on defense at end. Senior quarterback Robert Mocnjaj (6-1, 190) is an accurate passer. Senior wingback Gavin Parry is a productive runner and excellent receiver. Senior Addison Crowell returns in the secondary.

POTTERVILLE VIKINGS

League: Central Michigan Athletic Conference
Coach: David Matthews
2017 Record: 1-8, 0-7 8th
Players lost: Dylan McPhee (QB), Mike Riley (OL/DL).
Players returning: Andrew Baker (WR), Matthew Bowman (RB), Jimmy McDowell (WR), Myles Murphy (RB/DE), David Shelden (OL/DL), Mitchell VanNote (DB).
Outlook: The Vikings closed out the season strong with a win against Durand and are looking to carry over the success into this season. With a mix of veterans and young players looking to step up Potterville is focused on improvement this season.

GENESEE AREA CONFERENCE BLUE DIVISION PREVIEW

BURTON BENTLEY BULLDOGS

League: GAC Blue
Coach: Bill Schaffer
2017 Record: 2-7, 2-4
Players lost: N/A
Players returning: Jesse McDaniel OT/LB Jimmy Williams SB, DB
Outlook: "The key for success is to finish, and every time we get knocked down, we get back up and get a little bit better, Burton Bentley coach Bill Schaffer said.

BURTON ATHERTON WOLVERINES

League: GAC Blue
Coach: Kevin Bellant
2017 Record: 1-8, 1-5
Players lost: Demarcus Bush LB/RB, DeMarco Bush WR/DB, Drelan Curry DE, Kenota Townsend WR/RB, Jasper White,

QB.
Players returning: Justin Smith RB/DB, DeAndre Love WR, Hunter May QB, Eddie Mccant WR/DB
Outlook: Burton is a very young team with a new head coach. Keys to a successful season will be the offensive skill players and the O-line not to mention depth for the team and learning a new offense and defense.

FLINT HAMADY HAWKS

League: GAC Blue
Coach: Gary Lee
2017 Record: 7-3, 5-1
Players lost: Billy Williams DT
Players returning: Terrell Weston MLB, Koriant Moore QB.
Outlook: Hamady lost in the first round of the playoffs last season. With a strong quarterback returning don't be surprised to see the Hawks contend for a league championship and make a playoff off push this season.

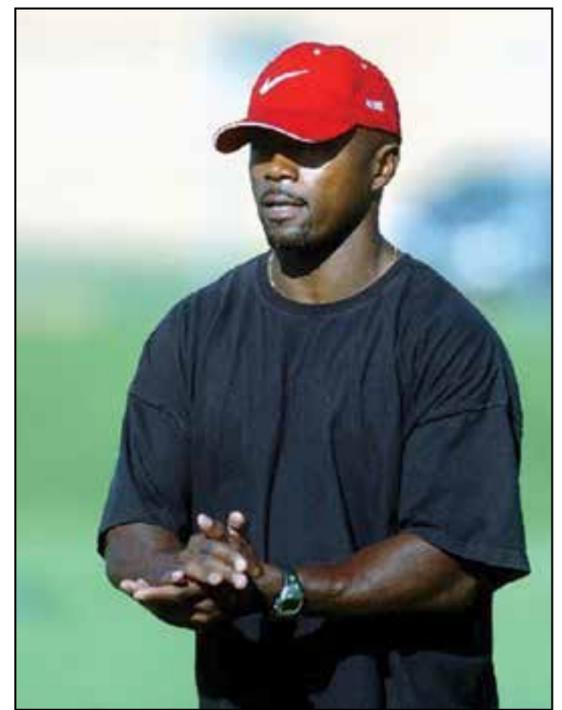
FLINT BEECHER BUCS

League: GAC Blue
Coach: Courtney Hawkins
2017 Record: 3-6, 3-3
Players lost: Terence Jenkins RB
Players returning: Dontae Cumming WR, Arad Brown, RB
Outlook: Coming off a disappointing season a year ago expect coach Courtney Hawkins to have his troops contending for a league title this season.

BURTON BENDLE TIGERS

League: GAC Blue
Coach: Jason Beverly
2017 Record: 5-4, 4-2
Players lost: Brent Scott QB
Players returning: Robert Brunell FB, Nick Love OC
Outlook: Bendle have made playoff pushes each of the last two seasons, barely missing the post season a year ago. Although the Tigers lost their starting quarterback from the last two seasons Bendle has solid depth to succeed this season.

Flint Beecher's Courtney Hawkins is hoping this year's team is able to bounce back from a 3-6 record from last season. (Submitted Photo)



Pewamo-Westphalia is looking for its third consecutive Division 7 championship this season. P-W opens the season August 24 against Ithaca. (File Photo)

GENESEE AREA CONFERENCE RED DIVISION PREVIEW

CORUNNA CAVALIERS

League: GAC Red
Coach: Kyle Robinson
2017 Record: 5-4
Players lost: Ethan Hollister QB
Players returning: Logan Gehring RB, Brock Brewer DE
Outlook: The Cavaliers need to be disciplined and cut down on turnovers to be a conference contender.

PONTIAC NOTRE DAME FIGHTING IRISH

League: GAC Red
Coach: Pat Fox
2017 Record: 8-3

Lake Fenton and Corunna will likely battle for a conference championship this season.



Players lost: Thomas Fazio, QB
Players returning: Nalin Fox DE, Andrew Mcghee DDT
Outlook: The Irish are in a new league this season

GOODRICH MARTIANS

League: GAC Red
Coach: Tom Alward
2017 Record: 8-2
Players lost: Carrington Wiggins WR
Players returning: Sam Fischer MLB, Jake Sims DT
Outlook: The Martians have the talent to win the league and make the playoffs.

LAKE FENTON BLUE DEVILS

League: GAC Red
Coach: Martin Borski



2017 Record: 8-2
Players lost: Paul Campbell DT
Players returning: Collin Wade TE, Dillon Byers RB
Outlook: The Blue Devils have the talent to possibly contend for a league championship this season, but need to stay disciplined.

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MID STATE ATHLETIC CONFERENCE PREVIEW

MONTABELLA EAGLES

League: MSAC
Coach: Shaun Balhorn
2017 Record: 4-5, 4-3 3rd
Players lost: Luke Burns, Wyatt Sackett, Jordan Balhorn, Lucas Olger.
Players returning: Aiden Woolworth, Ethan Crawford, Marshall Wright, Evan Brittain
Outlook: "This year's team has the potential to be very strong. We have a



lot of team speed and several weapons. We will be much more aggressive on defense. Our success relies on our ability to play as a team."

BRECKENRIDGE HUSKIES

League: MSAC
Coach: Kris Robinson
2017 Record: 10-2, 7-0 1st
Players lost: Logan Walz, N G
Players returning: Carter Staley, QB; Lukas Ebrting, SB
Outlook: Carter Staley leads the way for a Breckenridge team hoping for another conference title.

COLEMAN COMETS

League: MSAC
Coach: Chad Klopff
2017 Record: 3-6 2-5 6th
Players lost: Nick Sysak OL/DL, Brandon Kell, OL, DL
Players returning: Spencer Pnacek QB, Trevor Schrank WR/OLB
Outlook: The Comets appear to have enough talent returning to contend for the top half of the league;

Montabella and Vestaburg are hoping for bounce back season in 2018. (File Photos)

VESTABURG WOLVERINES

League: MSAC
Coach: Danny Ryckmam
2017 Record: 1-8, 1-6 7th
Players lost: Seth Stratton QB; Braxton Sheets, RB
Players returning: Kegan Crooks QB, Devon Brookens OG
Outlook: Wolverines will be young again but hope to avoid last place

MERRILL VANDALS

League: MSAC
Coach: Christian Wiley
2017 Record: 3-6, 3-4 5th
Players lost: Rique Hernandez RB/LB, Jake Knierim QB/DB, Eli Glazier WR/DB, Joe Felker, OL, DL
Players returning: Montana Glazier QB/LB, James Brandi WR/LB, Lucas Carlson OL/DL, Erik Hodges OL/DE, Billy Vance OL/DE, Tyler Fradenburg WR/DB, Brady Siler RB/LB, Zach Konesko OL/DE, Nick Thelen WR/DB, Johnny Smith WR/LB, Colton Glazier WR/DE, Logan Heath WR/DB, Vann Ebright OL/DL
Outlook: Merrill was extremely young

last year with four sophomores and two freshman starting on varsity and lost seven starters to injury throughout the season. "We finished the year with only 13 healthy players," Wiley said. "The good news is we return 12 players that started on at least one side of the ball and seven that started both ways so we have a lot of experience coming back. We are also very big up front which should help us in our run game. Our defense is loaded with experienced players that love to hit and we truly believe we will be able to stop people. We know the conference is tough but we plan on being there right at the top competing with Breckenridge and Carson City Crystal for a league title. Our goal is the playoffs and if we stay healthy this year, we believe we can reach that goal."

CARSON CITY-CRYSTAL EAGLES

League: MSAC
Coach: Tim Stout
2017 Record: 5-4, 5-2
Players lost: Jeremiah Elder OL/DL, Bretten Stanley DB, Noah Heckman DB, Wyatt Oistad LB, Nathan Ewalt



RB/DL: Seth Seida OC, Hugh McClaren DB.
Players returning: Aiden Adkins QB, Drew Stout RB/DB, Noah Lopez RB/DB, Caleb Collins TE/LB, Brody Mikula OL/DL, Nash Aiken OLLB, Brandin Murray OL/DL, Daniel Smith, OL/MLB.
Outlook: The Eagles have the potential to be a very good football team. The key to success will be staying focused and maximizing the potential.

HIGHLAND CONFERENCE PREVIEW

EVART WILDCATS

League: Highland Conference
Coach: Pat Craven
2017 Record: 4-5, 2-3
Players lost: Josh Dorn, LB
Players returning: Carter Pritchard (QB), Kyle Stokes (SB), Billy Conklin (MLB, RB)
Outlook: Evert will look to Carter Pritchard at quarterback after he sustained an ACL injury late last season. He's likely to be a strong passing quarterback. Kyle Stokes should be among his top receivers. Billy Conklin will lead the team at running back. A key is, however, is how Evert will play on the line, which will be young this season.

BEAL CITY AGGIES

League: Highland
Coach: Brad Gross
2017 record: 4-5, 3-2 3rd
Key players lost: Jason Clark OLLB, Aaron Schafter oDL, Kollin Sharrer

RB/DB, Dale Farrell OL/LB.
Key players returning: Seth Schafer TE/LB; Chase Smith LL/DL, Chase Maxon RB/DB, Nate Wilson. RB/DB/
Outlook: The team, coach Brad Gross said, as good as it wants to be if it plays as a team and stays healthy.

MANTON RANGERS

League: Highland
Coach: Eric Salani
2017 record: 4-5, 1-4, 5th
Key players lost: Jayden Perry RB, Hunter Ruell, QB
Key players returning: Trevor Salon LB/SB, Jakes Rensburg, RT/DT, Caleb Mehlke, DE/TE
Outlook: Salani says he has a young, but gritty team. The roster has 18 to 20 players, but it's a talented group.

MCBAIN RAMBLERS

League: Highland
Coach: Pat Maloney
2017 record: 7-3, 4-1, 2nd
Key players lost: Alex Utech QG, Auden Eling RB.
Key players returning: Austin Abbott WR/FS, Gavin Sieland QB/CB, Justin Kamphouse, WR; Brendan Narose, C.

Outlook: McBain expects to have enough returning talent to contend for a Highland Conference title.

LAKE CITY TROJANS

League: Highland
Coach: Kyle Smith
2017 record: 12-1, 5-0, 1st place, District and Regional
Key players lost: Wyatt Bisbal, Zach Noren, Jacob Ball, Waylon Eising
Key players returning: Seniors: Miles McLeod LB/FB, Matt Holt QB/DB, Nate Knapp OL/DL, Devan Davis FS/WR, Skylar Miller OL/DL, Michael Grieb OL/DL, Thomas Blumberg DL/OL, Juniors: Benjamin Marion TE/LB, Walker Herrick OL/DL
Outlook: Lake City has 20 returning players from last year's team, and is looking to improve upon last year. The Trojans will need to work on being consistent and pushing themselves to get better every day of every week. The offensive line will need to be the leaders.

PINE RIVER BUCKS

League: Highland
Coach: Terry Martin



Beal City is hoping to improve on last season's 4-5 mark entering the 2018 season. (File Photos)

2017 Record: 1-8, 0-5, 6th
Key players lost: Noah Carper (DL) Noah Carper (DL)
Key players returning: Bryan McCurry OL/LB, Elijah Lewis RB/DB, Lane Ruppert WR/DB, Josh Shaw OL, Brock Nelson FB/LB, Luke Hill QB, Ethan Crisp OL, Sasha Huffman RB/LB
Outlook: Pine River returns most of the starters from last year giving the

Bucks a lot of experience. Many of the players have been motivated by last season's struggles and have had great off seasons. Pine River should have a lot of team speed this year and multiple playmakers on offense. The team needs to improve on its our defense this season and be better in coverage and increase its overall toughness.

JACK PINE CONFERENCE PREVIEW

CLARE PIONEERS

League: Jack Pine
Coach: Kelly Luplow
2017 Record: 9-2, 7-0 1st
Players lost: Kolt Lincoln RB; Justin Tickle FS
Players returning: Brendan Sersaw WR/CB, Adam Boyd K
Outlook: Kelly Luplow continues to turn out Jack Pine Conference champions and it should be the case again this year.

FARWELL EAGLES

League: Jack Pine
Coach: Travis Waddell
2017 Record: 0-9, 0-7 8th
Players lost: Hunter Turner QB, Collin Maxey RB.
Players returning: Mason Warner OG, Blaine Macdonald RB.
Outlook: Farwell hopes to have a better season this year but it won't be easy in the Jack Pine.

SANFORD MERIDIAN MUSTANGS

League: Jack Pine
Coach: Michael Bilina
2017 Record: 2-7, 2-5 5th



Clare should be contending for another Jack Pine Conference title this season. (File Photo)

Players lost: Tabor Zieman MLB, Zane Borchard OC.
Players returning: Brett Barriger QB, Adam Kielpinski MLB.
Outlook: The key for the Mustangs will be to stay healthy if they hope to have a winning season.

BEAVERTON BEAVERS

League: Jack Pine
Coach: Aaron Seiser
2017 Record: 8-2, 6-1 2nd
Players lost: Eric Cassidy, MLB, Logan Williams SB.
Players returning: Jonathon Orlikowski R, Chris Schertz, SB.
Outlook: Beaverton hopes to have the talent to make a true run for first place against Clare.

HARRISON HORNETS

League: Jack Pine
Coach: Jamie Lipovsky
2017 Record: 6-4, 4-3 4th
Players lost: Tyler Head RB, Blaze Capen, SS
Players returning: Dakota Withey OT/DT, Colin Dunn MLB
Outlook: The Hornets expect to make the playoffs again and hope to be league contenders.

GLADWIN FLYING G'S

League: Jack Pine
Coach: Shad Fish
2017 Record: 2-7, 2-5, 7th
Players lost: Dylan Berlanga RB, Eric Seedback DB
Players returning: Austin Pahl QB, Kevin McKeever WR
Outlook: The Flying G's expect to contend for the playoffs this season.

ROSCOMMON BUCKS

League: Jack Pine
Coach: Steve Clements
2017 Record: 3-6, 2-5 6th
Players lost: Carson Crabtree WR, Seth Bauman RB
Players returning: Dylan Labenne DE, Kyle Hartman WR.
Outlook: The Bucks could be a playoff team this season if they stay healthy.

HOUGHTON LAKE BOBCATS

League: Jack Pine
Coach: Joseph Holloway
2017 Record: 7-4, 5-2 3rd
Players lost: John Steckler, QB; Jackson Blanchard, FS
Players returning: Sean Pattie RB/DB; Michael Stockman WR.
Outlook: The Bobcats are coming off a fine season and will have to replace several key players. If they stay healthy, they can contend.

MMAC CONFERENCE PREVIEW

CHESANING INDIANS

League: MMAC
Coach: John Mimranek
2017 Record: 4-5, 3-4 5th
Players lost: Jacob Shultz CB, Sam Forsyth RB
Players returning: Nicholas Fowler QB, Cole Higley FS
Outlook: Mimranek cut his coaching teeth working under Terry Hessbrook at Ithaca. Chesaning has the tools to finish the season 6-3 or better and make the playoffs in 2018.

OID-ELSIE MARAUDERS

League: MMAC
Coach: Travis Long
2017 Record: 7-3, 6-1 2nd
Players lost: Gage Palus QB, Brad Daher FS
Players returning: Devin Kora WR, Zach Miller FB



Ovid-Elsie moves into the Mid-Michigan Athletic Conference this season. (File Photo)

Outlook: With a mix of veterans and youth, The Marauders have the talent to make a bid for the conference title. Don't be surprised if Ovid-Elsie makes a playoff push this season.

BYRON EAGLES

League: MMAC
Coach: Byron Shartzter
2017 Record: 5-5, 4-3 4th
Players lost: Andrew Davison, WR
Players returning: Adam Lawrence OC, Jon Jamison WR
Outlook: The Eagles expect to return to the playoffs and make an even longer playoff run this season.

DURAND RAILROADERS

League: MMAC
Coach: Richard Winbigler
2017 Record: 0-9, 0-7 8th
Players lost: Brett Miller FB, Zack Harris WR
Players returning: Seth Bruce RB, Hunter Spaulding, OG
Outlook: Durand was outscored 340-

21 last season as the rebuilding process continues.

MONTROSE RAMS

League: MMAC
Coach: Dennis Reinhart
2017 Record: 7-3, 5-2 3rd
Players lost: Caleb Egbert QB, Reed Barney DB, Devin Quast
Players returning: Keegan Goodwin QB, Zeth Reed OG
Outlook: Montrose and New Lothrop should be battling for a conference title this season.

MOUNT MORRIS PANTHERS

League: MMAC
Coach: Jared Noel
2017 Record: 3-6, 2-5 6th
Players lost: William Jones RB, Darris Ortiz OG
Players returning: Andrew Beard RB, Devon Brink WR
Outlook: Coming off a 3-6 season Mt. Morris is gearing up to make a splash in the new league this season, however it

won't be an easy road for the Panthers

NEW LOTHROP HORNETS

League: MMAC
Coach: Clint Galvas
2017 Record: 10-1, 7-0 1st
Players lost: Ben Bigelow SB, Cameron Dusenbery OC
Players returning: Zack Riley WR, Avery Moore QB
Outlook: The Hornets advanced to the district finals last season, but plan on going farther this year.

LAKEVILLE FALCONS

League: MMAC
Coach: Patrick Johnson
2017 Record: 3-6, 1-6 7th
Players lost: Hunter Burgett CB, Seth Burwell TE
Players returning: Henry Deschner T, Austin Miller CB
Outlook: Lakeville is a team that can scare teams in league this season, however staying healthy is the key to a successful season.

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SAGINAW VALLEY LEAGUE RED PREVIEW

DAVISON CARDINALS

League: SVL Red
 Coach: Jake Weingartz
 2017 Record: 9-2, 5-1 2nd
Players lost: Tariq Reed RB, Austin Roland WR, Anthony Fordham WR/ CB, Gabe Ellis MLB, Tyrese Watson CB, Cari Terry FS, Garrett Goyete TE/ DE, Chase Chittick DE, Aaron Gilmore DL, Tommy Goyete OT, Lamar Hay RB/ FB, Eli Tiggart OT, Bryan Schaffer OG.
Players returning: Cannon Hall QB, Ray Cole CB, Mike Jammerson RB, Caleb Smith RB/WR/S, Travis Eades OG, Carson McLaughlin CB/WR, Max Slezak WR, Sean Schofield C, Dan Matatall OG, Cal Stefanko LB, Logan Pasco LB, Logan French DL, Lucas Edgar OT.
Outlook: "We can be as good as we want to be," coach Jake Weingartz said. "This team will be extremely young so a major key to our success is how

quick the younger guys can adapt to the speed of the game. We have one of the toughest schedules in our league by playing Southfield and defending state champion Warren De LaSalle for our out of league games."

LAPEER LIGHTNING

League: SVL Red
 Coach: Mike Smith
 2017 Record: 6-4, 4-2
Outlook: Lapeer doesn't look as strong as it has looked in recent years, however a 6-3 season and another playoff berth is a very realistic possibility this season.

SAGINAW ARTHUR HILL LUMBERJACKS

League: SVL Red
 Coach: Gregory Peoples
 2017 Record: 0-9, 0-6
Players lost: Fred Murray DB, Malique Foster LB
Players returning: Juron Jackson TE/ DE, Drew Cannon WR, Zamarian Foster QB, Nehemiah Jones OLB
Outlook: "This team has the potential

to do great things," coach Peoples said. If Peoples can get Arthur Hill to continue to work hard, the whole dynamic of the program can turn around in the coming seasons.

FLINT SOUTHWESTERN ACADEMY JAGUARS

League: SVL Red
 Coach: Andre Weathers
 2017 Record: 3-6, 2-4
Outlook: Andre Weathers takes over a program that is in need of a boost. Hopefully this is the year Southwestern turns the corner.

GRAND BLANC BOBCATS

League: SVL Red
 Coach: Clint Alexander
 2017 Record: 7-3, 4-2
Outlook: The Bobcats, under the steady leadership of Clint Alexander make the move into the Saginaw Valley Conference Red Division this season. Grand Blanc should contend for a share

of the conference championship.

FLINT CARMEN-AINSWORTH CAVALIERS

League: SVL Red
 Coach: Jerry Parker
 2017 Record: 5-5, 5-1
Players lost: Marshall Brooks QB, Nathan Delong OLB
Players returning: Dustin Fletcher QB, Derrick Crosby OC, Michael Fletcher DE
Outlook: The Fletcher brothers give Carman-Ainsworth one of the toughest 1-2 punches in the state. The only question remains is how everyone else on the team plays behind them. If the Cavaliers stay healthy expect a long playoff run.

FLINT POWERS CATHOLIC CHARGERS

League: SVL Red
 Coach: Jerry Todd
 2017 Record: 5-5, 3-3
Players lost: Kenson Connors RB,



Davison must find a replacement for star running back Tariq Reid who is now playing his college football at Grand Valley State University. (File Photo)

Kaden Nelson CB
Players returning: Joe Beauchamp QB, Hunter Crenshaw DE
Outlook: The Chargers have the depth to make a run for the league title.

SAGINAW VALLEY LEAGUE BLUE PREVIEW

BAY CITY CENTRAL WOLVES

League: SVC Blue
 Coach: Ken Frederick
 2017 Record: 5-5, 3-3
Players lost: Kameron Freeman TE, Austin Welter K
Players returning: Damien Worden OT, Xavior Hoyt FB, Devrel Washington WR
Outlook: The Wolves will have to stay healthy to have a productive season. Washington is a legit receiver with tremendous size and speed.

BAY CITY JOHN GLENN BOBCATS

League: SVC Blue
 Coach: Jeremy Werner
 2017 Record: 5-5, 3-3
Players lost: John Foss WR, Tom Lewis OLB
Players returning: Jobe Long QB, Jack Daily DT
Outlook: The Bobcats expect to make another run to the playoffs with a good mix of veteran and youth on the squad this season.

BAY CITY WESTERN WARRIORS

League: SVC Blue
 Coach: Chris Willertz
 2017 Record: 0-9, 0-6
Players lost: Parker Rivard WR, Ethan Wonch, FB
Players returning: Adam Doty SB, Jack Fryzel QB
Outlook: The Warriors fell on hard times last season and were outscored 348-45. Bay City Western is hoping that new coach Willertz will change the complexion of the program that has fallen on hard times of late.

MIDLAND CHEMICS

League: SVC Blue
 Coach: Eric Methner
 2017 Record: 8-2, 6-0 1st
Players lost: Cade Methner QB, Martin Money RB, Matt Waier DL, Vaughn Walker DL, Ryan Colton LB, Zach Servinski DB, Jacob Gomola DB, Ryan Sisitki DB, Mitchell Reid WR, Jessy Hayes LB, Ben Woehrl TE, Ben Gordon LB
Players returning: Carter Grove RB, Kadin Jacobs QB, Christian Gordon LB, Andrew Capua LB, Ethan Volmering LB/OT, Cam White OT/DT, Sam Hine DL, Joe Cullinane OG, James Harris C, Gage Alaniz OG, Tim Hackbarth WR
Outlook: "We have the potential to be

a good team," coach Eric Methner said. "Our goal will be to practice hard each day, and try to be a better team each and every day all season long. We have some potential underclassman starters who will need to successfully make the adjustment to the pace and physicality of the varsity level. We will strive to build overall depth moving forward."

MIDLAND DOW CHARGERS

League: SVC Blue
 Coach: Jason Watkins
 2017 Record: 7-3, 5-1
Players lost: Joe Wood CB Alex Leuter CB
Players returning: Zack Coon WR, Gage Kroll DT
Outlook: The Chargers have the talent to compete for the title, but the first couple games of the season will tell the story of what kind of year to expect from Midland Dow.

MOUNT PLEASANT OILERS

League: SVC Blue
 Coach: Jason McIntyre
 2017 Record: 5-4, 3-3
Players lost: Jayden Perry, SS
Players returning: Hunter Norris, Ryan Grossnickle, OG

Outlook: Do the Oilers have enough talent to make a run for the playoffs this season? That remains to be seen, but expect Mt. Pleasant to put together another solid season under coach McIntyre.

SAGINAW HERITAGE HAWKS

League: SVL Blue
 Coach: Matthew Peterson
 2017 Record: 2-7, 1-6
Players lost: Majestik Dudley WR/DB, Roberto Perez OL, Justin McMurren LB
Players returning: Nick Stewart LB, Keegan Robertson QB, Chance Atkins OL/DL, Jacob Nerio OL/DL, Jeremiah Jones WR/DB, Marcus Murphy DL
Outlook: "The team can build a strong foundation for the future," coach Matthew Peterson said, "if we pay attention to the little things and believe in a commitment to excellence."

SAGINAW TROJANS

League: SVL Blue
 Coach: Nate Simington
 2017 Record: 2-7, 1-6
Players lost: Demetress Bryant, Antwan Gaines, NeVen Simington, DelMichael Jeffries, Marshall Price, Anthony Sanders, Dimetri Wells, Jesse Sanchez, Cameron Culberson,

Demarrion Burton, and Toryan West
Players returning: Wildren Dawson WR/DB, Chaun Tolbert QB/DB, Devro Adkins DL/TE, Will Rogers OL/DL, Tony Martin RB/DB, Jackson Harris LB/OL, Kevin Hoggs LB/TE, Devarius Shade OL/DL, Jamontae York RB/DB, Cameron Williams WR/DE, and Jamil Watson OL/DL
Outlook: "Our team can be as strong as it wants to be," coach Nate Simington said. "Success will be determined by execution, it's all about execution on the field."



Heritage and Saginaw High will likely hover around the middle of the pack of the Saginaw Valley League Blue Division. (File Photo)

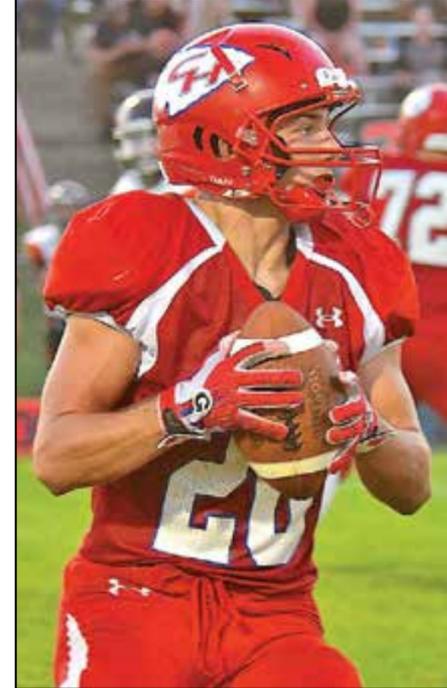
CSAA - GOLD PREVIEW

BIG RAPIDS CARDINALS

League: CSAA Gold
 Coach: Mike Selzer
 2017 Record: 3-6, 3-4 5th
Players lost: Aaron Repke QB, Braeden Childress TE/DE, Deion Jones RB/DE, Dylan Yeager DB, Connor Vennix RB.
Players returning: Issac Lobert OL/DL, Tom Lobert OL/DL, DJ Greenbay OL/DL, Matt Zeilinger OL/DL, Jacob Alber OL/DL, Elliot Blair RB/LB, Adam Bollman TE/LB, Jake Martinson, WR/DB, Jace Gray RB/DB, Nate Smith RB/OLB, Jayden Mason QB/DB.
Outlook: Elliott Blair at linebacker was the leading tackler last year and will anchor the defense. The Cardinals could be playoff contender.

CHIPPEWA HILLS WARRIORS

League: CSAA Gold
 Coach: Larry Jose
 2017 Record: 7-3, 6-1 2 d
Players lost: Seth Mackenzie WR, Cade Schafer QB, Andrew Vinton OL
Players returning: Mitchell Kuzma WR, Ty Jose, QB
Outlook: Warriors lost many key players from last season but will try giving Reed City a run for its money in the league race.



Chippewa Hills made it into the playoffs last season after finishing the year 7-3. (File Photo)

CSAA - SILVER PREVIEW

KENT CITY EAGLES

League: CSAA Silver
 Coach: Bill Crane
 2017 Record: 10-1, 5-0, first
Players lost: Cody Bowers (RB/DB), Luke Chipman (RB/LB), Jace Dailey (TE/LB), Sam Deems (OL/LB), Jake Edgerly (OL/DL), Wyatt Ellicott (OL/DL), Devin Loew (OL/DL), Gavin Mead (TE/DB), & Enrique Cruz (RB/DB)
Players returning: John Meek (QB/LB), Brenden Geers (TE/DL), Jared Coates (OL/DL), Evan Jones (RB/LB), Nolan Sweers (OL/DL), Nick Coalter (OL/DL), Rylan Kerwin (OL/LB), Giovanni Weeks (RB/LB), and Riley Andrews (TE/DB)
Outlook: Kent City is coming off the most successful two seasons in school history with an 8-3 record in 2016 and a 10-1 record in 2017. The Eagles have won the CSAA Silver in back-to-back seasons as well as making appearances in the district finals. With some major losses from last year's senior class, the 2018 Eagles will look to several juniors to step up and fill in on both the offense

and defense if they hope to win the CSAA Silver again and make a third consecutive trip to the playoffs. This group of seniors have been great leaders in the off-season and are hungry to continue to build on the success for a program that has traditionally struggled.

WHITE CLOUD INDIANS

League: CSAA Silver
 Coach: Richard Hance
 2017 Record: 2-7, 1-4 fifth
Players lost: Kevin Arnold, QB; Buck Seabrook RB/LB
Players returning: Tucker Kooman OL/DL - Steven Holt - RB/DB - Josh Mathews OL/DL
Outlook: With low numbers at the varsity level, success will be dependent on how players adapt and learn new positions and their stamina. The strength of this team will be the linemen.

LAKEVIEW WILDCATS

League: CSAA Silver
 Coach: Sean Rinehart
 2017 Record: 6-4, 3-2 3rd
Players lost: Jason Kroeze, Blake

Balyeat, Caleb Inman, Mike Zerka
Players returning: Andrew Nummer QB/LB, Addison Mitchell RB/S, Bailey Harris RB/LB, Andrew Heady, OL/DL



Morley-Stanwood coach Clark Huntley.

Outlook: Rinehart is confident his team can be very strong. "We were young last year and had some success, so as long as we can stay healthy, I feel like we could be more successful this season."

CENTRAL MONTCALM HORNETS

League: CSAA Gold
 Coach: Dave Clay
 2017 Record: 2-7, 2-5 6th
Players lost: Blake Ryan SB, Dakota Weston, CB
Players returning: Logan Heater OG, Aiden Train DT
Outlook: The Hornets hope to be middle of the pack in the division.

FREMONT PACKERS

League: CSAA Gold
 Coach: Rick Tank
 2017 Record: 0-9, 0-7 8th
Players lost: Hunter Cook WR, Adrian Zerlat, DB
Players returning: Austin Kukal OG/DT, Trevor Rasch DE
Outlook: The Packers are 0-27 the past three years but appear to be slightly improved.

NEWAYGO LIONS

League: CSAA Gold
 Coach: Scott Vanessen
 2017 Record: 7-3, 5-2 3rd
Players lost: Corey Crotser OC, Hudson Anthony, FB
Players returning: Andrew Goodin RB, Connor Swinehart QB.
Outlook: Newaygo is the only CSAA team in recent years to beat seven-time champ Reed City.

TRI COUNTY VIKINGS

League: CSAA Gold
 Coach: Phil Butler
 2017 Record: 1-8, 1-6 7th
Players lost: Kyle Proctor OLB, Nick Bialek TE
Players returning: Bryce Dube NG, Alfredo Visser OG
Outlook: The Vikings have struggled in recent seasons but will bid for the .500 mark this year

GRANT TIGERS

League: CSAA Gold
 Coach: Darren Geraghty
 2017 Record: 7-4, 4-3 4th
Players lost: Seth Davis DT, Gabe Castro OT
Players returning: Chase Lowry SS, Zackary Heiss OT/DT
Outlook: The Tigers hope to contend for the CSAA Gold title this season.

REED CITY COYOTES

League: CSAA Gold
 Coach: Monty Price
 2017 Record: 11-2, 7-0 1st
Players lost: Jeffrey Phenix DB, Jackson Miller OL
Players returning: Jackson Price QB, Phillip Jones-Price, RB, Stephen Shewan, LB
Outlook: The Coyotes have won seven straight CSAA titles and appear ready to win another one.

MORLEY STANWOOD MOHAWKS

League: CSAA Silver
 Coach: Clark Huntley
 2017 Record: 6-4, 4-1 2nd
Players lost: Aiden Nelson QB/LB, Tyler Dard WR/LB, Zack Vanderploeg WR/DE, Noah Hayes C/DT
Players returning: Trevor Underhill QB/DE, Logan Griffes T/DT, Drew Jensen RB/LB, Jason Bialik RB/LB, Xavier Raven WR/CB, Aiden Puite G/DT, Cody Ramirez G/DT, Caden Dillree RB/CB.
Outlook: Keys will be for the juniors to grow fast and be ready to play varsity football. MS will be a young team but has the nucleus to be a very good team.

HOLTON RED DEVILS

League: CSAA Silver
 Coach: Jack Nummerdor
 2017 Record: 3-6, 2-3 4th
Players lost: Brent McLaughlin WR, Dalton Giddings DE.
Players returning: Aaron Herron RB, Derek Pouch FB
Outlook: The Red Devils will battle Lakeview for the third-place spot

behind Kent City and Morley Stanwood

HESPERIA PANTHERS

League: CSAA Silver
 Coach: Doug Bolles
 2017 Record: 0-9, 0-5 6th
Players lost: Zach Young LB/RB, Triston Rubin G/DE, Scott Peters SE/LB, Kanin Witte RB/LB.
Players returning: Logan Balkema QB/S, Cameron Follett RB/LB, Ashton Arnold G/LB, Logan Pearson- RB/DB, Kaïden Robbins SE/DB, Connor VanBuskirk T/DT, Johnny Segura G/DT
Outlook: Numbers are low with 17 to 18, so depth will be a factor. "We can't have any key injuries," Bolles said. "But the guys we have are quality football players and good kids, they're fun to coach and have great attitudes. After last season there's nowhere to go but up. Realistically with our schedule, we're taking it one game at a time, but anywhere from four to six wins are a good possibility if everything goes right. I'm settling in now in my third season as head coach and I'm really happy with my coaching staff moving forward."

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FLINT METRO LEAGUE PREVIEW

HOLLY BRONCOS

League: Flint Metro
Coach: Ryan Culloty
2017 Record: 5-4, 4-4
Players lost: Grant Tooley TE, William Greer WR
Players returning: Ryan Hillier RB, Justin Williams DE
Outlook: The Broncos are confident of making the playoffs this season.

ORTONVILLE-BRANDON BLACKHAWKS

League: Flint Metro
Coach: Brad Zube
2017 Record: 7-4, 6-4
Players lost: Hunter Harrington MLB, Josh Manfroni WR
Players returning: Adam Trombley CB, Jeff Hickmott, QB
Outlook: Ortonville Brandon won its first playoff game in 18 years at the school last year and hopes to make a longer run this season.

OWOSSO TROJANS

League: Flint Metro
Coach: Devin Pringle
2017 Record: 0-9, 0-8
Players lost: Brenden Steele CB, Joe Morris TE
Players returning: Jalen Waters SS, Collin Wood, WR
Outlook: The Trojans continue to struggle for wins, but hope to make progress under coach Devin Pringle.

SWARTZ CREEK DRAGONS

League: Flint Metro
Coach: Joe Spencer
2017 Record: 3-6, 2-6
Players lost: Grant Taylor CB, Travis Truett RB
Players returning: DJ Brown RB, Jarrell Hunter P
Outlook: The Dragons, if they stay



Ortonville-Brandon made a strong playoff push a year ago after finishing 7-4 on the season. (File Photos)

away from injury, could contend for a winning record.

CLIO MUSTANGS

League: Flint Metro
Coach: Capus Robinson
2017 Record: 2-7, 2-6
Players lost: Jon Hardy WR, Kody Ryan RB
Players returning: Andrew Cochran CB, Alec Lamb SS
Outlook: Clio is hoping that it is capable of pulling off a few upsets this season in league play.

FENTON TIGERS

League: Flint Metro
Coach: Jeff Setzke
2017 Record: 9-3, 8-0
Players lost: Josh Czarnota QB, Chanse Setzke Receiver/DB, Trevor Edgar RG, Josh Maher Rec/

DB, John Sage WR/DB, Grady Sondgeroth C/LB, David Pietryga FS.
Players returning: Lance Mercord RB/LB, Spencer Rivera RB/OLB, Logan Prater T/DT, Dane Dean G/DT, Jaden Laines RB/OLB, Zack Pierson SS, Ethan Fulton Rec/OLB, Ryan Miller WR Austin Henard, DE, Parker Brady, DE, Will Smith, DT
Outlook: The Front seven return on defense for the Tigers. Fenton will be young in spots but very talented. Strength of the team should be the defense, offensive line and running backs.

KEARSLEY HORNETS

League: Flint Metro
Coach: Kaleb Forr
2017 Record: 2-7, 2-6
Players lost: Nathen Warren OG

Players returning: Blake Keller FB, Joe Brulla OT
Outlook: The Hornets struggled last season and will shoot for a winning record this season.

FLUSHING RAIDERS

League: Flint Metro
Coach: Robert Oginsky
2017 Record: 9-3, 6-2
Players lost: Ben Cushman MLB, Michael Banks CB
Players returning: Andrew Stephens WR, Donny Snyder FB
Outlook: The Raiders got as far as the regional final last season and hope to have a longer playoff run this year.

LINDEN EAGLES

League: Flint Metro
Co-Coaches: Nick Douglass and

Denny Hopkins
2017 Record: 9-3 7-1 2nd
Players lost: Josh Abernathy DL/RB, Hunter Babcock WR, Zac Brown DL, Cade Dickson LB/RB, Noah Giacomantonio DB, Eddie Grode OL, Avery Jacobs LB, Corbin Sines WR, Owen Wagnitz DL
Players returning: Josh Abernathy DL/RB, Hunter Babcock WR, Zac Brown DL, Cade Dickson LB/RB, Noah Giacomantonio DB, Eddie Grode OL, Avery Jacobs LB, Corbin Sines WR, Owen Wagnitz DL
Outlook: This team will be led by returning All-League performers on both sides of the ball, most notable is George Waltherhouse at QB. Linden has a ton of depth on the offensive and defensive line this year. Defensively Linden will be solid throughout all 11 positions with experience at multiple spots.

2018 DETROIT LIONS PREVIEW

Matt Stafford, Matt Patricia Looking To Develop New Winning Formula In Motown

Butch Harmon Sports Scene

With veteran quarterback Matt Stafford leading a potent offense and new head coach Matt Patricia bringing his defensive resume with him from the New England Patriots, the Detroit Lions are banking on having the right leaders in place to return to the NFL playoffs after a two-year drought. Sports Scene Magazine gives its take on this year's edition of the Detroit Lions.

Key veteran additions: LeGarrette Blount (RB, Eagles), Christian Jones (LB, Bears), Devon Kennard (LB, Giants), DeShawn Shead (CB, Seahawks), Sylvester Williams (DT, Titans), Luke Willson (TE, Seahawks).

There were no splashy free-agent signings in the offseason, but that doesn't mean the Lions made some positive additions during the free-agent signing period. The additions of Devon Kennard and Christian Jones provide an infusion of size and depth to the linebacking corps. Kennard is a 6-foot-4, 256-pound outside linebacker who recorded four sacks with the Giants last year while Jones (6-3, 244) is tough against the run and will shore up the outside linebacker position. At 6-foot-2 and 328 pounds, former Tennessee Titan Sylvester Williams brings a huge, run-stopping presence to the middle of the defensive line. Tight end Luke Willson, who grew up just over the Detroit River in LaSalle, Ontario, is a dependable

receiver with good size who can surprise. Veteran running back LeGarrette Blount (6-0, 247) is the type of goal-line/short-yardage threat the Lions have not had in several years.

Key draft picks: Frank Ragnow (OC, Arkansas), Kerryon Johnson (RB, Auburn), Tracy Walker (S, Louisiana-Lafayette), DaShawn Hand (DE, Alabama).

The Lions continue to stock the offensive line and first-round selection Frank Ragnow (6-5, 317) brings excellent size and strength to the middle of the line. In round two the Lions added Auburn running back Kerryon Johnson (6-0, 213), a running back with decent size with the elusiveness to make people miss. Former Alabama standout DaShawn Hand (6-4, 297) is another big body to add to the defensive line.

Offensive strengths: Matthew Stafford is 30 years old and in the prime of his career. Stafford finished in the top six in the NFL in yards, touchdowns and quarterback rating last year, giving the Lions a quarterback you should be able to win with. Wide receivers Marvin Jones and Golden Tate were the NFL's only pair of receivers with 1,000 receiving yards apiece. Kenny Golladay showed promise as a rookie last year and with ex-Seahawk Luke Willson added to the mix at tight end the receiving corps is better than average.

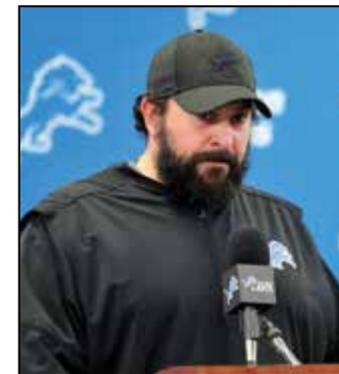
Offensive question mark: The Lions were dead last in the NFL in rushing yards per game and

per carry last year. The offensive line must show improvement in the ground game. A healthy Taylor Decker at tackle will help and the team spent a first-round pick on center Frank Ragnow. Veteran guard T.J. Lang turns 30 and must stay healthy. The Lions also need rookie Kerryon Johnson and veteran LeGarrette Blount to make a positive impact.

Defensive strengths: New head coach Matt Patricia spent 14 years in New England including the last several years as the Patriots' defensive coordinator. Patricia will mix things up scheme wise but will surely feature pass-rushing defensive end Ziggy Ansah. The return from injury of Kerry Hyder, who led the team in sacks two years ago, will be a boost to the pass rush as well. The Lions brought in free-agent Sylvester Williams to beef up the middle of the defensive line. Cornerback Darius Slay tied for the league lead with eight interceptions last year and heads up a solid all-around secondary.

Defensive question marks: Linebacker has been a position in flux the last few years. Last year's first-round draft pick Jarrad Davis showed plenty of promise when healthy. The Lions added free agents Christian Jones and Devon Kennard on the outside in the hopes of stabilizing the position. Improved play overall by the defensive front will be a must. If Ansah and Hyder can stay healthy the pass rush will be improved.

HSSS Take: The Lions overcame some key injuries to finish with a 9-7 record last season but still fell just short of a playoff berth. Matt Patricia has been brought in to take the Lions the next step. Offensively, the Lions can put points on the board with a potent passing game, but an improved running game would be a big help. The Lions are



New Detroit Lions coach Matt Patricia addresses the media after a recent practice. (Submitted Photo)

banking on an improved pass rush with the return of injury of Kerry Hyder along with new additions at outside linebacker. To make the playoffs, the Lions need to handle business inside the division where a 4-2 mark against the Vikings, Packers and Bears is imperative. Outside the division the Lions face the likes of the Patriots, Rams, Cowboys and Panthers. The Lions need to win at least two of those games and then need to win four of six against the Jets, 49ers, Dolphins, Seahawks, Cardinals and Bills to reach 10 wins and secure a playoff berth. A 10-6 record is the goal but another 9-7 campaign looks to be in the cards and if key injuries strike 6-10 looks to be the floor.

Mid-Michigan High Schools Well Represented In The NFL

Butch Harmon Sports Scene

The Mid-Michigan area is known for hard work and getting the job done. It's no surprise that a number of Mid-Michigan high school players have parlayed their blue-collar work ethic into spots with NFL teams. The following is a look at players from local high schools that are taking part in NFL training camps.

BIG RAPIDS

Justin Currie, DB, Cleveland Browns: Currie totaled six tackles and a sack in three games with the Browns last season.

GREENVILLE

Justin Zimmer, DL, Atlanta Falcons: the former Greenville standout was in camp with the Buffalo Bills in 2016 and was on the Saints' practice squad last year.

HASLETT

Jake Lampman, WR, Tampa Bay Buccaneers: Lampman saw action with the Saints two years ago and is battling for a job with the Bucs.

LANSING CATHOLIC CENTRAL

Cooper Rush, QB, Dallas Cowboys: Dak Prescott's backup last year, Rush is having another solid training camp.

MIDLAND

Andrew Wylie, OL, Kansas City Chiefs: Wylie played three quarters in the Chiefs pre-season game against Houston and is looking to stick at offensive tackle.

NEW LOTHROP

Amari Coleman, DB, Tampa Bay Buccaneers: Originally signed by the Lions, Coleman intercepted three passes last year for Central Michigan.

OKEMOS

Taylor Moten, OL, Carolina Panthers: In his second year with the Panthers, Moten is looking solid after moving in as the starter at right tackle.

ROCKFORD

Parker Ehinger, OL, Kansas City Chiefs: In his third season with the Chiefs, Ehinger is a valuable reserve at guard who started his rookie season. Joe Staley, OL, San Francisco 49ers: In his 12th year with the 49ers, Staley is still one of the premier left tackles in the NFL.

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2018 College Football Preview



MICHIGAN WOLVERINES

2017 record: 8-5, 5-4 Big Ten East
Offense: The offense received a shot in the arm when quarterback Shea Patterson, a Mississippi transfer, was deemed eligible for the 2018 season. Patterson totaled 3,139 total yards at Mississippi last year and completed 62% of his passes. Patterson has plenty of talent to work with in big-play receivers Donovan Peoples-Jones and Tarik Black and tight end Zach Gentry. Karan Higdon and Chris Evans head up the running back crew where Ben Mason (6-3, 250) may be one of the premier fullbacks in the country. Three starters return to the offensive line where new line coach Ed Warriner is improving the overall skill level of the unit.
Defense: The Wolverine defense has the talent to be one of the nation's best this fall. Defensive end Rashan Gary (6-5, 281) is poised for a huge year and could be a top-ten pick in next year's NFL draft. Middle linebacker Devin Bush is a budding superstar at linebacker. Senior Chase Winovich is an impact player at defensive end while outside linebackers Khaleke Hudson and Devin Gil bring outstanding quickness to a dynamic linebacking group. The entire secondary returns led by all-Big Ten cornerback Lavert Hill.
Local angle: Former Rockford High School standout Quinn Nordin turned in a big freshman season last fall. Nordin connected on 19-of-24 field goals last fall including a season-long 55-yard field goal against Florida.
Our take: With Ohio State in turmoil the stars are aligned for the Wolverines this fall. Plenty of talent returns on offense and the addition of quarterback Shea Patterson could be the spark plug that ignites the offense. The defense will be among the best in the country. If Jim Harbaugh can solve the Ohio State/Michigan State riddle (1-5 his first three years) and survive a trip to Notre Dame in the season opener, the Wolverines could be in for a memorable season.



MICHIGAN STATE SPARTANS

2017 record: 10-2, 7-3 Big Ten East
Offense: A total of ten starters return on offense for the Spartans led by junior quarterback Brian Lewerke who produced 3,352 yards of total offense and 25 touchdowns. Running back L.J. Scott (6-1, 230) returns for his senior year and is poised for a breakout season after averaging 4.5 yards per carry last year. Senior wide receiver Felton Davis (6-4, 196) earned all-Big Ten honors last year as he averaged 14.1 per catch while sophomore wideout Cody White (6-3, 214) averaged 14.0 yards per catch as a freshman. Four starters return to the offensive line although standout center Brian Allen will be missed. Allen's younger brother Matthew Allen (6-3, 296) is poised to step into his spot.
Defense: Plenty of experience returns on defense with nine starters back. Junior defensive tackles Raequan Williams (6-4, 295) and Mike Panasiuk (6-4, 294) are a rugged pair of defenders up front along with defensive end Kenny Willekes (6-4, 250) who plays with a non-stop motor. Junior middle linebacker Joe Bachie is coming off a big sophomore season where he totaled 100 tackles and 8.5 tackles for loss. The "No

Fly Zone" is back in operation in the secondary where cornerbacks Justin Layne and Josiah Scott and safety Khari Willis lead the way.
Local angle: Former Belding High School offensive lineman Bryce Wilker (6-5, 305) is a walk-on that is entering his fourth year in the program. Wilker has put in the work and is part of an offensive line that features a wealth of depth and talent.
Our take: The Spartans surprised many last year by winning 10 games and finishing second in the Big Ten East. Opponents will be wary of the Spartans this fall but with plenty of depth on both sides of the football the Spartans will again be among the top teams in the Big 10. A strong start could propel the Spartans to another double-digit win season.



CENTRAL MICHIGAN CHIPPEWAS

2017 record: 8-5, 6-2 MAC-West
Offense: The passing game needs to be rebuilt as quarterback Shane Morris graduated after passing for 3,237 yards in his one season in Mt. Pleasant after transferring from Michigan along with four of the top five receivers. The Chippewas do return a talent at running back in Jonathan Ward who rushed for 1,019 yards and 10 touchdowns last year enroute to earning all-MAC honors last year.
Defense: A total of six starters return on defense although the Chips were hit hard in the secondary. The linebacking crew is the strength of the defense. Senior middle linebacker Malik Fountain (6-2, 240) has earned all-MAC honors the past two years and totaled 89 tackles last fall. Senior outside linebacker Alex Briones (6-2, 240) added 83 tackles and three sacks last year and fellow outside backer Michael Oliver added 68 tackles.
Local angle: Lansing Catholic Central grad Tony Poljan (6-7, 237) is in the hunt for the starting quarterback job. Last fall as a freshman Poljan played in all 12 games completing 10-of-17 passes for 61 yards, rushing for 110 yards and catching five passes for 97 yards. Senior Logan Hessbrook (6-3, 235), an Ithaca High School grad, is one of the top returning pass catchers after catching 10 passes for 132 yards and a touchdown last year.
Our take: Question marks abound for the Chippewas. How quickly Poljan develops at quarterback and how the young receivers develop will be key on offense. Rebuilding the secondary and developing a pass rush are crucial on defense. The Chippewas have recruited well and plenty of young players are poised to step up.



WESTERN MICHIGAN BRONCOS

2017 record: 6-6, 4-4 MAC-West
Offense: With eight returning starters, the Broncos have the pieces in place to continue the offensive success of the past four years that has seen Western average over 30 points per game. A full season of health for junior quarterback



Michigan State University is considered a top 5 team in the Big 10 heading into the 2018 season.

Jon Wassink will be key as Wassink completed 64% of his passes for 1,411 yards before a season-ending injury in week eight. With all-conference linemen John Keenoy (6-3, 300) and Luke Juriga (6-4, 289) paving the way, the Broncos have a potent ground game featuring running backs LaVante Bellamy and Jamauri Bogan. The offense could receive a huge boost if University of Michigan transfer Drake Harris can enjoy an injury-free season at wide receiver.
Defense: Defense is a big question mark for the Broncos. A total of five starters were expected back before all-conference cornerback Sam Beal declared for the NFL supplemental draft this summer and was selected by the New York Giants. The Broncos could use a return to health by free safety Justin Tranquill who missed most of last season with an injury after totaling 86 tackles in 2016.
Local angle: Look for former Saginaw Swan Valley standout Alex Grace (6-1, 220) to be one of the defensive leaders. The junior linebacker has played in 24 games the past two seasons and totaled 32 tackles and two forced fumbles last year. Senior offensive lineman Curtis Doyle (6-5, 305), an Alma High School grad, will be in the mix at guard. Doyle started last year's season opener at USC before missing the bulk of the season due to an injury.
Our take: The Broncos have the pieces in place for an explosive offense, the big question is on the defensive side of the football. Improvement on defense will determine if the Broncos go bowling in the offseason.



EASTERN MICHIGAN EAGLES

2017 record: 5-7, 3-5 MAC-West
Offense: The offense returns six starters but must replace quarterback Brogan Roback who set several school records. Senior Tyler Wiegers, a University of Iowa transfer, gets first crack at the

job. Four starters return to what is a talented and veteran offensive line. Veterans running backs Ian Eriksen and Shaq Vann combined for 1,330 yards rushing and 11 touchdowns last year and spearhead what will be a solid ground game.
Defense: A total of seven starters return to what will be a solid defense. Defensive ends Maxx Crosby (11 sacks) and Jeremiah Harris (12.5 tackles for loss) are impact players up front. The entire secondary returns led by all-conference safety Brody Hoying who totaled 78 tackles last season. The Eagles boasted their best defense in years last fall and the potential exists for an equally solid defense this fall.
Local angle: Otis Jackson III is a Saginaw Heritage graduate who spent one semester at Northwood before transferring to Eastern Michigan last year. Jackson is looking to provide depth in the defensive backfield.
Our take: The Eagles are looking to return to a bowl after just missing out last season. The key on offense is developing a new quarterback. The elements are in place for a solid offense provided the Eagles come up with a solid replacement at quarterback.



NORTHWOOD TIMBERWOLVES

2017 record: 7-4, 5-4 GLIAC
Offense: The Timberwolves return a seasoned quarterback in junior Joey Garbarino (6-2, 210). An honorable-mention, all-conference player, Garbarino threw for 723 yards and eight touchdowns and rushed for 568 yards and seven scores. Garbarino also returns his top four receivers from last year. Up front, the T-Wolves have several experienced linemen returning. The ground is led by senior Dominic Giovinnazzo and junior fullback Abdul Levy. Junior guard Chris Jacobs (6-3, 280) anchors the offensive line.
Defense: A number of veterans return on defense led by linebacker Travis Wiltjer (6-2, 225) who led the team in tackles with 72 last year. Senior linebacker Niko Savich (5-11, 224) added 57 tackles last year. Senior defensive back Chad Samuels earned all-conference honors last year with 49 tackles and three interceptions. Northwood is solid up front with a defensive line anchored by Darius McCrae (6-2, 315).
Local angle: A pair of Portland High School graduates return to man the defensive end positions. Senior Zach Gustafson (6-6, 255) totaled 8.5 tackles for loss while senior Hunter Scott (6-4, 224) added 2.5 tackles for loss.

Our take: The Timberwolves went from four wins in 2016 to seven wins last season. With a veteran quarterback and plenty of experience on both sides of the ball, Northwood has the talent to put together another winning season.



FERRIS STATE BULLDOGS

2017 record: 11-2, 8-1 GLIAC
Offense: The offensive line is the strength of the team. The unit is deep and talented and is anchored by seniors Devon Johnson (6-7, 315) and Nic Sawyer (6-5, 305), a pair of pre-season, Division 2 All-Americans. Junior quarterback Travis Russell gained plenty of experience last year as he completed 50% of his passes for 1,242 yards and nine touchdowns along with rushing for

447 yards and six touchdowns. The Bulldogs have a deep cast of running backs and return their top four pass catchers from last year led by Malik Taylor who caught 61 passes for 906 yards and six touchdowns last year.
Defense: The top nine tacklers have graduated from last year including defensive end Zach Sieler, who became the first Ferris State player taken in the NFL draft when the Baltimore Ravens selected him in the seventh round. A total of 14 seniors graduated from last year's defense including three who are in NFL training camps. While veterans may be in short supply this fall, the Bulldogs annually bring in top-notch recruiting classes and have a deep pool of talented defenders ready to step into starting roles.
Local angle: Senior wide receiver Malik Taylor is a Montrose High School graduate and is developing into one of the premier receivers in school history. Junior defensive end Austin Edwards from Lansing Waverly totaled 18 tackles last season while sophomore BJ Powell, an East Lansing grad, added 18 tackles and two interceptions.
Our take: The Bulldogs reached the NCAA Division 2 national quarterfinals for the second straight year last fall. A return trip to the playoffs will be challenging this year as the Bulldogs suffered heavy losses on the defensive side of the football. The offense has the ingredients to be explosive this year and if the new starters produce on defense Ferris State will again challenge for the GLIAC title.



GRAND VALLEY STATE LAKERS

2017 record: 8-3, 7-2 GLIAC
Offense: Senior quarterback Bart Williams (6-6, 225), a Grand Blanc grad, has taken his place as one of the top signal callers in Grand Valley history. Sure to pop up on the radar of NFL scouts, Williams completed 61% of his passes last fall for 3,334 yards and 33 touchdowns. For his career Williams has passed for 9,854 yards and 105 touchdowns. Senior wide receiver Nick Dodson has 1,558 yards receiving and 22 touchdown receptions in his career. Several running backs are in the mix including Chawntez Moss, a transfer from Pittsburgh who rushed for 343 yards and three touchdowns in his two years playing in the ACC. A pair of all-conference tackles return in Ben Walling (6-5, 295) and Nick Fish (6-7, 300) and University of Michigan transfer David Dawson (6-4, 320).
Defense: There is no question the Lakers will put plenty of points on the scoreboard this fall, the key to a big season, however, is found on defense. Grand Valley returns a number of veterans on defense and adds junior defensive lineman Johnathon Williams (6-5, 270), a Notre Dame transfer.
Local angle: Senior defensive end Dylan Carroll (6-4, 265), a Portland High School grad, is a leading returnee on defense after totaling 43 tackles and five tackles for loss last year. Sophomore linebacker Tyler Bradfield (5-10, 190), a Rockford grad, added 45 tackles as a freshman and is poised to take the next step this year.
Our take: The GLIAC is loaded with high-powered offenses and the Lakers may have the best offense of all. Ranked fifth in the country in Division 2 by Street & Smith's Football Magazine, Grand Valley is poised for a big year and is determined to make a run at the GLIAC title.



SAGINAW VALLEY STATE CARDINALS

2017 record: 5-6, 3-6 GLIAC
Offense: Junior quarterback Ryan Conklin (6-2, 210) earned all-conference honors last year as he completed 56% of his passes for 2,329 yards and 16 touchdowns. The Cardinal aerial circus will fly high again this season as sophomore Chad Gaillard returns at receiver. The GLIAC Freshman of the Year last fall, Gaillard led the GLIAC with 934 receiving yards as he caught 42 passes and scored eight touchdowns. Returning all-conference offensive lineman Trevor Curle (6-3, 295) anchors a line that includes junior veterans Max Fister (6-3, 310) and Chris Johnson (6-4, 301).
Defense: A total of six starters return to anchor the defense. Senior safety Dillon Dixon totaled 64 tackles and seven pass breakups last year. Seniors Ryan Gruszka (6-4, 242) and Sloan Klaski (5-10, 225) returns at defensive end and linebacker respectively.
Local angle: Senior linebacker Michael Alexander (6-0, 235), a Miland High School grad, is the leader of the defense after leading the team with 94 tackles last year. On offense, the passing game gets a lift from the return of Grand Ledge grad Will Farr (6-4, 242) at tight end. Farr missed most of last year with an injury after averaging 13.9 yards per catch and scoring two touchdowns in 2016.
Our take: The Cardinals will be fun to watch this season with the return of Conklin and his top receiver Gaillard. Improvement on defense is a key to success this season and with the talent returning a winning season may well be in the cards.



ALMA SCOTS

2017 record: 4-6, 1-5 MIAA
Offense: Not only does Alma have a new head coach in Jason Couch, but the Scots are breaking in a new quarterback for the first time in four years. Dylan Zaborowski graduated with the third-most total yards in school history. Junior Mason Ippel who passed for one touchdown and ran for another last season will get first dibs on the job. Look for more of an emphasis on the running game. Senior running back Caleb Reinhart rushed for 823 yards and scored 11 touchdowns last season. Four veterans return to anchor the offensive line as well.
Defense: The defense was also hit hard by graduation with the top four tacklers having moved on. Junior defensive back Colin Smith, a Pewamo-Westphalia grad, is the leading returning tackler with 44 tackles and eight pass breakups last year. Senior defensive back Chris Luckhurst, an Ovid-Elsie grad, returns after totaling 38 tackles and five pass breakups.
Local angle: Alma's defense has a local flavor led by Caleb Reinhart, a Montrose grad, who set a school record with 241 yards against Benedictine College last fall. Offensive linemen Fischer Klein of Portland St. Patrick and Dakota Jelinek of Montrose help pave the way for Reinhart.
Our take: The Scots will have a new look this year with a new head coach and starting quarterback. The defense is also going through a makeover. Look for the Scots to try and control games with a potent rushing game.

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